

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

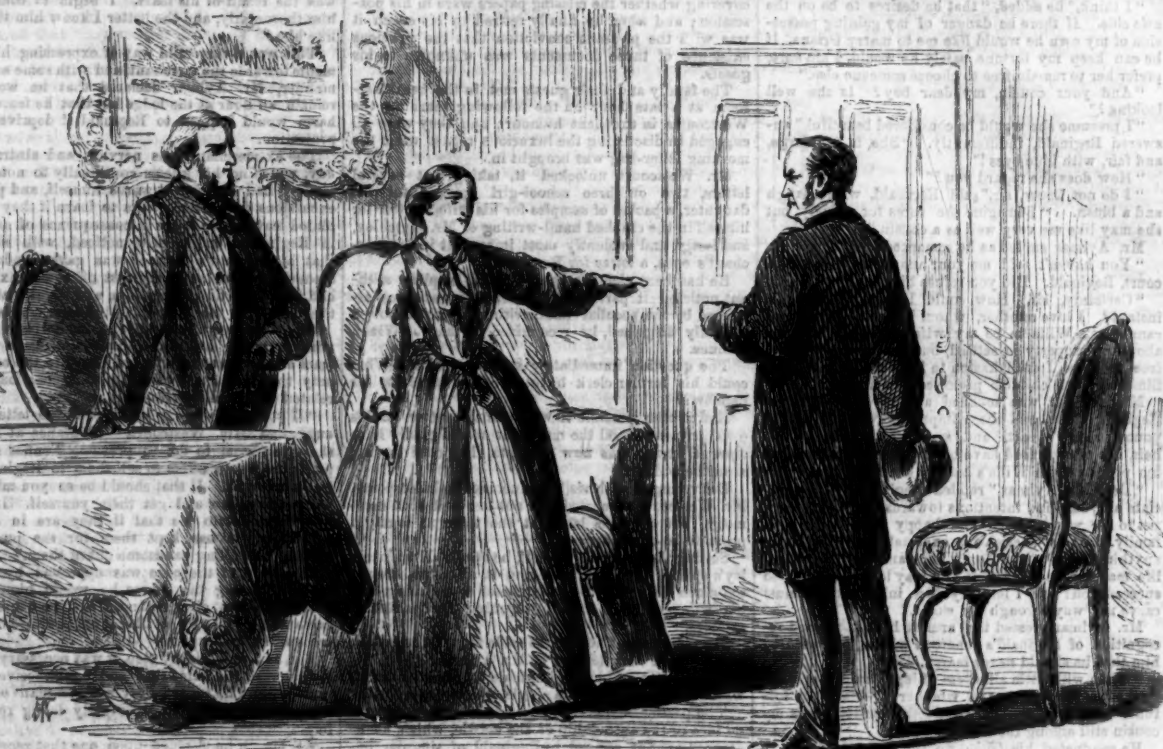
THE RIGHT OF TRANSLATION IS RESERVED.

REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.

No. 156.—VOL. VIII.

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 9, 1967.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[MARY SHOWS MR. WESTCOURT THE DOOR.]

REGINALD'S FORTUNE.

CHAPTER XXV.

Read o'er this:
And then to breakfast, with
What appetite you have!

Shakespeare.

AFTER escorting Miss Oriana upon her ride Reginald Westcourt returned to the apartments assigned him for his private use at the lodge, and meditated long and deeply upon the conversation he had held with his relative. He had not spoken out as strongly as he had been tempted to do, not desiring a rupture with his uncle until all attempts at a peaceful settlement of the differences between them had been tried.

He had intended disclosing to Mr. Westcourt that his affections were irrevocably engaged to Willa Heath, and that he could not therefore offer himself as a suitor for the hand of his cousin, but the opportunity for making this disclosure had not been afforded him.

As he reconsidered the matter he concluded that the project of a marriage between himself and Oriana had not been sanctioned by the latter, but had been simply a scheme of the merchant.

To discover the object of such a scheme appeared to Reginald a very serious thought.

It seemed to him that his uncle was desirous of reconciling him, but for what reason?

If he were really penniless, excepting his expectations from Mr. Aylmar, why should the merchant wish to bestow his daughter upon him? He must know there were possibilities in favour of Mr. Aylmar's marrying at some future period, and his expectations would then be crushed.

"I cannot understand my uncle at all," he mused. "He evidently has schemes quite beyond my apprehension. I am sure that Oriana does not care for me—for anybody indeed but herself. She is very agreeable, however, and her society renders the lodge tolerable, but I do not like to remain here. Would that

I were back at the manor, whence I could visit Willa every day! I shall count the days until my birthday, when I shall see her again!"

He walked the floor once or twice, meditating upon some excuse for taking his departure before the time agreed upon, and finally said:

"I feel that I ought to see Mr. Aylmar. I really need his counsel, but I do not like to leave the lodge until I arrive at a better comprehension of my uncle's intentions. I will write to Mr. Aylmar, desiring a letter by return of post."

Taking out his writing-case, he wrote a letter to his friend, detailing his recent interview with the merchant, and desiring counsel as to his own future movements.

Instead of sending the letter in the bag, as was usual with the family, he resolved to walk over to the post-office himself, not caring to rejoin his relatives immediately.

As he passed out through the flower garden in front of the lodge he encountered his cousin, who was wandering among the flowers. She stopped him, demanded playfully where he was going, regretting that she could not accompany him; and then took his arm as far as the gate, declaring that she should anxiously await his return.

"The lodge is so dull without you, Reginald," she exclaimed. "I don't find papa and mamma very charming companions, their ideas are so different from mine, you know. I suppose I ought not to expect elderly people to feel as I do, but I think it very natural and right that young people should have young people around them!"

"If you could know my friend Mr. Aylmar," answered Reginald, with a smile, "you would consider old people sometimes charming. Mr. Aylmar is not old—he's in the very prime of life, in fact—but he's so genial, so good, so noble."

"He can't be very good to keep you from us so long," returned Oriana, with an answering smile. "I didn't half appreciate you in our childhood, Reginald. I am sorry for it, for we might have been such friends. I believe I used to be jealous of Willa Heath!"

This apparent frankness almost sufficed to remove

any unpleasant impression the young lady might have made upon her cousin.

It would have done so had her manner been as frank as her words.

But Oriana could not change her nature, and the element of sincerity had no prominent place in her character.

Her words, consequently, were only remembered as light talk intended to amuse, not as the expression of something really felt.

With a laughing remark that their future relations should be more cousinly, Reginald lifted his hat; bade her good-morning, and set out for the village.

He had traversed half the distance when his attention was attracted to an approaching figure, which a closer investigation showed him to be Mr. Aylmar.

Quickening his steps, he hurried forward to meet him, and the two gentlemen were soon shaking hands as fervently as if they had not met for a year.

"My dear boy," exclaimed Mr. Aylmar, joyfully.

"You can't tell how I have missed you since you left home. The manor house is fearfully gloomy and desolate without you; so, as I promised, I have come to see you. Are you well and happy?"

"I am well and happy, too, since you have come," answered Reginald. "I was at this moment on my way to post a letter to your address, requesting your advice about something that has occurred."

"You can tell me what it is as we walk along," said his friend, linking his arm in Reginald's. "I will go with you to the lodge, and call upon your worthy—or unworthy—relative. Have you quarrelled with him?"

"No, sir, but I had a conversation with him to-day in regard to my fortune, and he seemed very anxious to discover if I had any papers to prove my claims. I cannot imagine where he thinks I should obtain such papers."

"Perhaps he has lost some documents bearing on your fortune," replied Mr. Aylmar, thoughtfully. "Such a thing is quite possible, although scarcely probable, as it seems to me. At what conclusion did you arrive with him? At what point did the interview terminate?"



Reginald showed a momentary embarrassment, then answered, frankly:

"He proposed to me to marry my cousin, declaring that she should have a large dowry from her grandfather."

"He wants you to marry his daughter, eh? If you are poor why does he propose such an alliance?"

Reginald replied that he had been unable to explain his uncle's proposal, except upon the ground that his fortune remained intact, and that the merchant desired to keep it in the family.

"I think," he added, "that he desires to be on the safe side. If there be danger of my gaining possession of my own he would like me to marry Oriana. If he can keep my fortune safely he would, I am sure, prefer her to remain free to choose someone else."

"And your cousin, my dear boy? Is she well looking?"

"I presume she would be considered beautiful," answered Reginald, indifferently. "She is tall, large, and fair, with blue eyes."

"How does she regard you?"

"I do not know, sir," said Reginald, with a laugh and a blush. "I imagine she cares for nobody, but she may like me very well as a cousin."

Mr. Aylmar smiled as he remarked:

"You haven't told me your answer to Mr. Westcourt, Reginald. Did you refuse his offer?"

"Certainly, sir. How could I entertain for an instant? I love another, whom I hope to marry. I cannot ask Willa to be my wife until his business about the property is settled, but as soon as I feel free to do so I shall hasten to her and claim the fulfilment of her childish promise to be mine."

Mr. Aylmar was touched at the earnestness of Reginald's tone, and the glimpse afforded him of the young man's heart, and suggested that, as his hair, his *protégé* need have no apprehensions of being too poor to claim Willa's hand if she loved him.

"Dear Mr. Aylmar," replied Reginald, "I appreciate all your kind intentions towards me, but I hope yet to see you married and happy with your own family. I do not cherish any expectations of inheriting anything from you. I only hope and pray that your life may be long and that you may leave children to succeed you! If I lose my own inheritance I must carve my way through the world."

Mr. Aylmar pressed the arm he held in pleased recognition of Reginald's generous wishes, but assured him that he should never marry.

"Time will settle all these things," said Reginald, "whether you marry and whether I obtain my fortune. But here we are at the lodge, and there is my cousin still among the flowers."

He conducted his friend up the gravelled path to the spot where Miss Oriana stood, idly plucking to pieces a bouquet she had gathered, and introduced his friend to his cousin.

Miss Westcourt had imagined her cousin's friend to be a genial old personage, with gray hair and fatherly manners, and was consequently greatly surprised at finding him an elegant gentleman, in the very prime of life, and quite capable of awakening a strong interest in her heart.

Arousing herself from her usual languor, she exerted herself to produce a pleasant impression upon him, and soon proposed an adjournment to the house, remarking:

"Papa will be so delighted to see Reginald's friend. You will honour us by stopping at the lodge, of course, Mr. Aylmar?"

"Thank you, but I purpose taking up my quarters at the village, Miss Westcourt," was the response.

On entering the drawing-room the merchant and his wife arose to greet them, and Mr. Aylmar was cordially welcomed to the lodge.

The cordiality was mostly assumed, Mr. Westcourt not being particularly pleased with the appearance of his nephew's friend upon the scene.

Mrs. Westcourt shared her husband's annoyance, fearing that Mr. Aylmar might frustrate their schemes in regard to Reginald, but her annoyance was partly conquered by her pleasure in entertaining a gentleman so far above the circle to which she had gained admission.

With Mr. Aylmar as a guest, she might certainly soon gain recognition from the leading county families.

Influenced by this idea, she was very gracious in her demeanour, inviting him to remain at the lodge, and when he declined, urging her hospitality upon him until it would have been unpoliteness in him to longer refuse.

The merchant echoed his wife's invitation with forced heartiness, and Mr. Aylmar finally acquiesced, permitting his luggage to be sent for.

"I consent to accept your hospitality, Mrs. Westcourt," he said, "on condition that yourself and family visit Aylmar Manor on the occasion of Reginald's birthday *à la*."

The condition was accepted with genuine pleasure

and satisfaction—the merchant, his wife and daughter, desiring nothing so much as to be on visiting terms at the manor, and their annoyance at receiving Mr. Aylmar immediately subsided.

Perhaps, after all, they might find an auxiliary in him, in regard to the promotion of a marriage between the cousins. He must certainly see that such a course would be the best plan for smoothing all difficulties in respect to Reginald's fortune.

The remainder of the day and evening was devoted by the merchant to Mr. Aylmar in the hope of discovering whether the missing papers were in his possession; and when he finally retired to his couch it was with the pleasant conviction that the previous existence of those documents was unknown to his guests.

The family and their guests met in the breakfast-room at a late hour on the following morning, the Westcourts in excellent humour; and they were all engaged in discussing the luxurious repast when the morning letter-bag was brought in.

Mr. Westcourt unlocked it, taking out several letters, two or three school-girl epistles for his daughter, a packet of samples for his wife, a letter for himself in the crabbed hand-writing of Mr. Hentley, and lastly, and evidently most important in the merchant's eyes, a letter for Reginald.

He had been about to hand it to his nephew without noticing it particularly, when his gaze was attracted by the peculiar hand-writing, which although partially disguised, he recognized as that of Wixon Fennes.

The question immediately suggested itself—What could his former clerk have to communicate to his nephew?

Had it been possible to withhold the letter for his own private perusal the merchant would gladly have done so, but it was now too late, Reginald having seen the address.

Delivering it with visible reluctance to his nephew, Mr. Westcourt requested him not to stand upon ceremony, but read his letter at the table, as it might prove to be of importance.

Setting the example himself, he opened Mr. Hentley's epistle, pretending to read it, although he was too much disturbed to comprehend its meaning, and his wife seconded him by opening her packet of samples.

Miss Oriana put her letters aside for future perusal, and engaged the attention of Mr. Aylmar.

Thus left to himself, Reginald opened his letter, which he found without a single clue to the writer.

The postmark was London, and of course afforded no idea of the authorship of the epistle, which, as he glanced over it, seemed to Reginald of singular importance.

It began with the statement that the writer had always taken great interest in Reginald Westcourt and his fortunes, and that, having always kept an eye upon his movements, knew him to be visiting Westcourt Lodge at the moment the letter was written. It warned him to be on his guard against his uncle, who intended defrauding him of his fortune. It then assured him that his possession of the property depended entirely upon the production of certain papers establishing his claims to it. These papers the merchant had lost. They were in the writer's possession, and would be delivered to Reginald upon his birthday, their present possessor not daring to give them up before that period lest by some successful machination they should fall into the merchant's hands. It concluded by bidding Reginald dismiss all anxieties upon the matter, and look forward to coming quietly into possession of his own, but advised him to keep this information a secret from his relatives.

Reginald read it over once or twice with considerable agitation of manner, that did not escape the furtive glances of his uncle, and then put it in his pocket, becoming grave and thoughtful.

As soon as he could do so, the young man drew Mr. Aylmar from the room, conducting him up to his own apartments, where he gave him the letter to read, asking his opinion of it.

"It is very singular and very promising," said his friend, when he had carefully read it. "Have you any suspicion as to the person who wrote it?"

"Not the slightest," was the reply. "I know of no one who would have taken so much interest in me as that letter indicates. It seems to me to have been written by one who has some feeling against my uncle as well as regard for me. The hand-writing is evidently that of a man. I wonder who he is, and how he knows the day upon which I shall come of age!"

"That allusion, or the knowledge it betrays, is not at all singular, if the writer of the letter has, as he says, kept track of your movements, Reginald. Everybody in our neighbourhood knows of the *fiat* that is intended to celebrate the attainment of your majority. I have made no secret of it, of course."

"Would you advise me, then, to build any hopes upon the production of those documents, sir?"

"It can do you no harm, my boy. Let matters work themselves out. We will remain here until shortly before the *fiat*, and then depart, with your relatives, for the manor. Give Mr. Westcourt no clue to your new hopes, and keep the letter in your pocket. I would not destroy it, as you may want it to refer to."

"The letter makes my uncle's allusion to the production of the necessary papers quite plain," said Reginald, putting the letter in his pocket, as advised. "He lost them and feared they had found their way into my hands. His proposal for me to marry Oriana was the result of his fears. I begin to comprehend him thoroughly, and the better I know him the less I like him."

This was a very mild way of expressing his sentiments towards the merchant, and with some energy of manner, Mr. Aylmar declared that he would not remain an hour at the lodge but that he feared some harm would happen to Reginald if deprived of his protection.

The ex-merchant was nervous and abstracted all day, watching his guests continually to note if their manner had changed towards himself, and planning excursions for several days to learn if they contemplated leaving the lodge in consequence of any news in Reginald's letter. He noticed, with suspicion, that his nephew's manner was grayer, and that he seemed to have suddenly cast off some anxiety that had been weighing upon him, and rightly attributed this change to the contents of the anonymous epistle.

He seized an opportunity of conferring with his wife privately, and, on communicating to her his fears and their cause, was confirmed in the belief, not only that the letter came from Fennes, but that it related to the missing documents.

"If you could only get a sight at the letter, Reid," suggested Mrs. Westcourt. "A glance at it would show you what to do. I presume Fennes stole the papers, and now offers to sell them to Reginald for a handsome sum. If that should be so you might outbid your nephew and get them yourself. It is perfectly evident to me that if they are in Fennes's possession he has kept them for the purpose of making something handsome out of them."

This view of the case was approved by the merchant, it being the course he would himself have adopted in like circumstances, and he began to conceive a hope that by a liberal expenditure he should recover the lost papers.

But, as a preliminary step, it was necessary that he should read the letter that had been received by his nephew, and he turned over various plans of gaining a sight of it, each plan eventually being rejected as impracticable.

At length he decided upon one that received his own and his wife's approbation, and waited until night to carry it into effect.

At the very dead of night, then, when the household was wrapped in slumbers, the merchant stole, lantern in hand, like a thief, to the apartments assigned to his nephew.

He had removed his shoes, habited himself in dark garments, and the lantern he carried was carefully shaded.

Reginald's doors were unlocked, of course, and he found no difficulty in effecting a noiseless entrance into the dressing-room, which guarded the sleeping-chamber.

Here he paused, his heart throbbing violently. He felt himself a thief, although in his own house, and was apprehensive of discovery.

He knew that if he were found in his nephew's room at that hour, he could offer no excuse for his conduct, and Reginald would probably leave his roof on the morrow.

Moving, therefore, with the utmost caution, he examined his nephew's writing-case, and boxes, but fruitlessly.

He was about to proceed into the bed-room when he noticed, carelessly flung across a chair, the garments Reginald had worn that evening.

An examination of the coat-pockets brought to light the letter, which the merchant verified by turning the slide in the lantern and permitting the light to stream upon it.

He then withdrew with it to his own chamber, where, with Mrs. Westcourt, he read it again and again, torturing every expression into a menace at himself. He finally said:

"I see nothing in here about wanting a reward for the papers, Isabella. I believe Fennes means to give them to Reginald. In that case, I must expect trouble!"

"He says nothing about pay, because that would injure himself in the first letter," was the response. "Rest assured that Fennes is too clever to give them up for nothing. He would probably demand his pay on delivering them!"

"Very true. I must see Fennes immediately. Of course it wouldn't do for me to call at his place of business, but I dare say I might find him at Foddick

Cottage, if I should arrive there in the evening. He probably spends all his evenings there!"

"You mustn't appear too anxious to get the papers, Reid, and you might threaten him for the robbery. I wonder how he did it!"

The merchant refolded the letter, replaced it in the envelope, and stole back to Reginald's dressing-room, restoring the missive to his nephew's pocket.

He then returned to his room with a lighter heart.

For years those missing documents had been to him like the sword of Damocles. In his happiest moments he had been anxious to learn their fate, and had feared that they would ultimately be produced, and he should be obliged to render up the fortune he had come to regard as his own.

He had never known from which quarter to expect the blow, and had tried to persuade himself of their destruction.

To know at last where they were, that his nephew neither possessed them nor knew their possessor, brought with it a relief that was almost happiness.

He did not doubt that he should be able to recover them from Fennes, whose former weak and yielding nature had encouraged his own wicked designs, and he resolved to try every means, if necessary, to attain his ends.

Accordingly, the next morning, when Mr. and Mrs. Westcourt met their guests at the breakfast-table, the former said, with many apologies:

"I am obliged to leave you for a day or two. I have received a letter yesterday from my former business manager entreating my advice and personal influence in a matter he is arranging, and I should like much to oblige him. I shall therefore be unavoidably absent until after to-morrow, perhaps."

Mr. Aylmer and Reginald, quite relieved at the proposed absence of the merchant, politely urged him not to consider them as a hindrance upon his movements, and soon after the repast he bade them adieu.

Mrs. Westcourt followed him to the door, where the pony-carriage was in waiting, with the groom up behind, and her husband assured her that he should remain a week if necessary, but that he should not return without the important documents.

And then, in excellent spirits, he mounted the vehicle, seized the reins, and drove off to the village station.

CHAPTER XXVI.

Virtue may be small'd, but never hurt;
Surprisd by unjust, but not enthralld;
Yes, even that which mischief meant most harm
Shall in the happy trial prove most glory;
But evil on itself shall back recoil. *Milton.*

On the morning of Mr. Westcourt's departure from the lodge on his secret mission Mr. Fosdick, with his ward and her lover, went up to London for the purpose of consulting an eminent barrister, and engaging him to defend Wixon Fennes at his approaching trial, of which he had already received intimation.

The barrister to whom they were about to apply was known to be generally successful in every case he undertook, and this fact influenced good Mr. Fosdick in selecting him, but he also knew that the lawyer was said to refuse advocating any cause that had in it the element of injustice or guilt, and he feared that he might decline defending the erring clerk.

Arrived at the barrister's office, they were ushered into his presence, and the little party made known their wishes, not, however, without fear and trembling.

The lawyer was a keen-eyed, shrewd-looking man, who had passed his fiftieth year, but was in the prime of health and vigour.

Glancing from one to the other of the trio, he speedily comprehended the relation in which they stood to each other, and he was impressed with the fragile looks of Mary, the manliness and self-control of her lover, and the eager interest shown in them both by their sterner-looking friend.

"You will undertake the case, sir, will you not?" asked Mr. Fosdick, in a tremulous tone. "I am willing to pay any sum to get the poor boy clear!"

"Mr. Fennes had better tell me the whole story, and how it came about," returned the barrister. "I can then decide whether or not to accept the responsibility you offer me!"

Fennes obeyed, giving a clear statement of the whole affair, relating how he had been forced to undertake the crime, &c., how Mary had bribed the policeman to go away, and how he had now returned to give evidence against him.

The young man's tones and manner attested his truthfulness, but the lawyer subjected him to a rigid cross-examination before delivering an opinion, inquired how he had spent the seven years that had elapsed since the commission of the crime, and at length said:

"I do not wish to hold out any hopes to you that will not be gratified, but I will say that you need not

despair. With any intelligent jury your consistent and honourable conduct for the last seven years would have great weight, particularly if your present employers should speak in your favour. I will undertake your case."

He was interrupted by the thanks of his visitors, who were greatly encouraged by his words.

"It will be difficult to convict Mr. Westcourt of forcing you into the crime," continued the lawyer, "as you have only your statements made at the time and this young lady's unsupported testimony of a virtual confession to offer in support of the allegation. Miss Hayward's relation to you may affect her testimony in the eyes of judge and jury. If we could only so bring circumstances to bear upon the merchant that he would be forced to confess, I could almost promise you an acquittal!"

"I will try to obtain a confession from him!" said Mary, her colourless cheeks lighting up with the sudden flame of excitement. "I am sure I can think of a plan to accomplish so important an object!"

"I am inclined to think you could," returned the barrister. "A young lady who could face such a man as Mr. Westcourt and actually force him to give bail for the man who was supposed to have nearly ruined him; who could induce an important witness to exile himself from his native land for years; who could remain true and devoted to her lover, when all the world turned against him; such a young lady, I am sure, would find an insurmountable difficulty to gather evidence that will tend to clear her lover. You see, Miss Hayward, you have already performed such prodigies, in such a quiet, matter-of-course way, that we expect more of you."

Mary hardly knew whether the last sentence was uttered in jest or earnest, but she promised in her gentle but self-assured tones to do all she could, and the lawyer then turned his attention to the leading facts in the case itself, making notes in a little book now and then.

At length he dismissed his visitors, and they passed out into the street in a more hopeful mood than they had entered his chambers.

"I think, Mary," said Mr. Fosdick, as they walked along, "that I shall remain in town for two or three days to look after this business with the lawyer, as well as to arrange some matters with the mercantile house with which I am connected. You will not be afraid to stay at the cottage alone with Milly?"

"Oh, no, uncle. I have done so often, you know, when your business has obliged you to remain a day or two in London."

"Very well, then. Wixon shall escort you home this evening, and then return. I will send him down every evening to spend a couple of hours with you, so that you will not be very lonely."

The lovers thanked him for this consideration, Wixon's week of holidays having expired, and they soon separated, Fennes going with Mr. Fosdick to their place of business, and Mary proceeding to visit a friend with whom she intended spending the remainder of the day.

At an early hour of the evening Fennes called for his betrothed and escorted her to her country home, where they talked over the events of the day.

They were thus busily engaged when Milly ushered into the little parlour Mr. Reid Westcourt.

Years had passed since the guilty employer and his clerk had met, and each felt a momentary embarrassment in the presence of the other.

Mr. Westcourt looked with surprise upon the altered face of his former clerk, noticed the firm lines about his mouth and the clear light in his eyes, and felt that Fennes's character had greatly changed since he had made him the instrument of his wicked will.

Fennes greeted the merchant very coldly, inquiring what he wanted.

"I should like a private interview with you," responded Mr. Westcourt, with an uneasy glance at the maiden. "I have something of importance to say to you, Mr. Fennes."

Mary glanced at her lover, who signified to her that she had better withdraw, and himself escorted her to the door, whispering:

"Some strange providence may have sent Mr. Westcourt here at this moment. Remember what the lawyer said, Mary. Perhaps I can draw from him an acknowledgment of his guilt. Listen in the next room."

Mary bowed assent, and her lover entered the parlour, where the visitor had seated himself to await Fennes's return.

There was a momentary silence between the two men, and then Mr. Westcourt said, with an assumption of friendliness:

"My dear Fennes, it's a long time since we have been friendly with each other. Surely, two persons linked together as we have been ought to be friends. There is nothing I would like so well as to advance your fortunes, and promote your marriage to Miss

Hayward, to whom I believe you are still only engaged!"

"You are very kind, Mr. Westcourt," returned the clerk, in a tone of irony. "I am only sorry that your friendly feelings for me did not show themselves before. You certainly showed none of them when forcing me to commit a crime at which my soul revolted!"

"I did not come here, my dear Fennes, to recall unpleasant memories," said the merchant, with a quick avoidance of the dangerous subject. "In reference to the matter to which you allude I will only say that I have often regretted that you never applied to me for a certain sum I promised you. I should have been only too happy to have honoured your demand!"

"And this is what you have come here to tell me?"

"No. My present visit is connected with a letter you sent to my nephew the other day."

"A letter?" interrupted Fennes, in confusion.

"Yes. You wrote an anonymous letter to Reginald. It will be useless for you to deny the fact, for, despite the attempted disguise, I knew the handwriting in a moment!"

The clerk looked surprised and annoyed, but he made no attempt to deny the accusation.

"How did you gain possession of the letter, Mr. Westcourt?" he demanded. "I can hardly think that Mr. Reginald would confide in you to such an extent as you seem to pretend."

The merchant was, in turn, confused, but replied:

"I saw the address and knew it was from you."

"And so opened it and read it. In short, you intercepted it, and Mr. Reginald has not seen it!"

"You are wrong, Fennes. It came when we were at breakfast, and I was obliged, of course, to give it to him. Afterwards it fell into my hands and I read it. I assure you that I speak the truth."

Fennes regarded his visitor narrowly, becoming convinced that he spoke truthfully, and then asked:

"In whose hands is the letter now?"

"Reginald's."

"Well, what do you propose to do about it?"

asked the clerk. "What has the letter to do with your visit to me?"

"It shows me, of course, where my lost papers are—the papers referring to Reginald's fortune! It was you who took them from my desk seven years ago, Fennes!"

The clerk smiled, but remained silent, and the merchant continued:

"I can understand that you were looking for your forged cheque among my papers, and took the other documents by accident."

"You are mistaken, Mr. Westcourt. I did not take them by accident. As the fact has come out that I know where they are, I will tell you how I became possessed of them. After applying to you in vain that night for the cheque by means of which you had forced me to commit a crime, I was about to rush from your house when a sudden impulse seized me to go up to your room, and look for it without leave. I acted on that impulse. I gained your room, but had hardly done so when the sound of voices approaching induced me to conceal myself in an adjoining closet."

The merchant interrupted him by an exclamation which Fennes did not heed, and the latter continued:

"I had hardly done so when two of your women servants entered and sat down by the fire to talk. They remained there until your approach with your wife, and I found myself a listener to your wicked plots in regard to your nephew's fortune."

"You did?"

"Yes, Mr. Westcourt; I heard you plan to burn those papers, and I resolved to obtain them. When you finally retired and went to sleep I stole out into the room, took the keys from your pocket, searched your desk, discovered the secret compartment, and took the papers it contained. I then left your house. That night, before I slept, Mary and I burned the fatal cheque, and I was free from your clutches."

"And the papers?"

"They, as you suspect, are still in existence. Your nephew shall present them to you on his approaching birthday."

The merchant was pale with fear and anger, and said, hoarsely:

"You have kept these documents, of course, for the purpose of claiming a reward from Reginald. Name the amount you intended demanding of him, and I will double it, on condition that you give me the papers."

"Not for the whole amount they represent, Mr. Westcourt, would I give those papers into your hands!" declared Fennes, firmly and sternly. "Not all the gold in the world would tempt me to wrong an orphan, or aid in arming the oppressor! You have strangely mistaken my character, sir, when you deem me capable of selling these documents to Mr.

Reginald Westcourt. On the day he comes of age I shall place them in his keeping, claiming not one penny as a reward. I should refuse anything he might offer, for in doing as I have done and shall do I am only performing a sacred duty."

"These are very fine sentiments," sneered Mr. Westcourt, "and I suppose they are for the purpose of enhancing the value of the papers in my sight. I assure you I shall not haggle at the price for them. Ask what you will, and it shall be yours, on the sole condition that you give me the documents."

The clerk's tone was doubly stern as he answered: "Is it, then, so difficult for you to believe in honour? Must you degrade all men to your own level? I tell you I am no more capable of doing what you demand than I am capable of flying! I refuse your proposal—refuse it with scorn, and beg you to cease your importunities. As sure as I live, or Mary Hayward lives, just so sure shall Reginald Westcourt receive those papers on his coming birthday."

There was no mistaking Fennes's tone and manner.

The merchant could not fail to see how terribly he was in earnest, and a succession of cold chills convulsed his frame.

And yet he did not immediately yield the point, but entreated, promised, and threatened, failing in all his changes of mood to make the slightest impression upon his former clerk.

At length he begged to see the papers, if only for a single moment, alleging that another important document had been unintentionally put amongst them, and that its loss occasioned him great inconvenience.

"I cannot grant your request," replied the clerk. "The papers are not in my own keeping, but I will look them over. If you have spoken truly and there should be among them a document of no importance to Reginald's fortune, in no way related to it, and in no way calculated to injure anyone, I will send it to you. I own, however, that I do not believe there is such a paper in the packet, and I believe that you have said so merely as an excuse to seize the packet itself."

The merchant almost foamed at the mouth with his rage at hearing this remark.

He actually raved in his anger, but Fennes listened to him quite unmoved, although once or twice he smiled at the expressions used by his visitor.

"So the papers are not in your keeping?" said the merchant, at length. "Have you put them into the hands of a lawyer?"

"I decline answering your questions."

"Or are they in the keeping of Miss Mary Hayward?" cried Mr. Westcourt.

Fennes was silent.

"I see they are!" declared the merchant, more calmly. "Call Miss Hayward in, Fennes. I am sure she would advise you to accept a handsome sum, and relinquish your vain and foolish ideas of honour."

Before the clerk had time to respond Mary entered the room, and Mr. Westcourt appeared to her.

"Mr. Fennes has spoken for both of us," said the gentle maiden, with dignity. "You do not seem to comprehend the sentiment of honour."

"Honour! Wilson Fennes is a suitable person to talk of honour!" sneered the merchant, angrily. "A man who has forged, committed arson—"

"Stop!" commanded Mary, with a flash of spirit. "By whom was he forced into the latter crime? Was not the respected Mr. Westcourt by far the guiltier? I have no patience to listen to you. I will not hear Mr. Fennes insulted by you. In short, Mr. Westcourt, I beg you to take your departure immediately—the sooner the better!"

Drawing up her slight figure, she pointed to the door with a queenly gesture, and the baffled and discomfited merchant involuntarily retreated a few steps, and assumed a more respectful demeanour as he said:

"I beg your pardon, Miss Hayward, but I cannot leave the matter in its present unsettled condition. I am willing to give Fennes a cheque for any amount if he will deliver up those papers. You will then be free to marry when you choose. I assure you I do not want them for any wrong purpose. I have long since relinquished the scheme Fennes overheard me discussing with my wife. I do not mean to wrong my nephew of a penny!"

"Then, of course, you can have no objection to leaving the papers where they are?"

"But you have no right to them, Miss Hayward. Fennes stole them from me!"

"They belong to you, Mr. Westcourt, no more than to us. They are Mr. Reginald's!"

"But they were given into my keeping by his late father—my elder brother!" urged the merchant.

"They are consequently mine, until my nephew comes of age. Besides, they are absolutely necessary to me in arranging his affairs before his coming into

possession of his property. I can do nothing without them!"

"Then I will send them to Mr. Aylmar and Mr. Reginald Westcourt without further delay," rejoined the clerk. "They will take all necessary steps to put your nephew into possession of his own."

The merchant was alarmed at this response and protested against any immediate movement being made, declaring that his affairs were entangled, and that such a step would plunge not only himself but his innocent family in ruin.

The clerk remained deaf to all his pleadings, repeating his assertion that on the morrow he would dispatch the packet of papers to Mr. Aylmar by a sure hand.

"You will, then, have no consideration for me or for my wife and daughter?" demanded the merchant.

"I have sufficient consideration for you to prevent your committing another crime," answered Fennes. "Had you consideration for me or for my friends seven years ago?"

The merchant made a gesture of annoyance, and, turning to Mary, asked:

"Miss Hayward, will you permit me to see your uncle? I conclude that Mr. Fosdick is in your confidence. He is a man of business and must see the strait in which I am placed—required as I am to render up my nephew's property without any date to work upon. I am sure he would recognize my right to these documents, and would advise you to accept instead of them a handsome compensation."

"My uncle is not at home," replied Mary. "He has gone up to London and will not return before three days shall have passed. You know the house with which he is connected, and can seek him there. I warn you, however, that he regards you with abhorrence, and that he will not listen to your demands with patience. I suppose," added the maiden, "that your business here is finished, and that we may consider the interview at an end."

She accompanied her words with a glance at the door which was a silent command, and with a very ceremonious bow the merchant yielded obedience to it, taking his departure.

There was a smothered curse on his lips as he passed out into the dark and silent night, and he paused at the little garden gate, muttering:

"That girl has got those papers in her possession, and I must and will have them. I swear I will not go home until I can take them with me! What should prevent my taking them?"

He looked back at the cottage with a more hopeful expression, continuing:

"Fennes stole them from me. Why should I not steal them back again? They are really mine. Mr. Fosdick has gone to London to be absent two or three days, and I have a most excellent opportunity before me. Of course, Fennes will not sleep at the cottage. He has his business to return to, and besides it would hardly be proper for him to do so. She will be alone with her servant to-night. What is to prevent my taking my own papers? I think it will be easy to find them among her small possessions. Yes, I will follow Fennes's example. I will conceal myself somewhere until he goes and then find a way to enter the house."

He turned from the gate, stepping upon the lawn that his footsteps might not be heard, and secreted himself in the midst of a clump of bushes, awaiting the expected departure of Fennes.

(To be continued.)

GLASS TRADE, AMERICA.—The making of window and bottle glass at Pittsburgh (U.S.) gives employment to 1,800 men and boys, whose annual wages amount to 1,896,516 dols. The amount of silica consumed is 242,960 tons, and is chiefly brought from Missouri. The annual value of the manufactured glass is estimated at 2,160,000 dols. These reports are of the window and bottle glass work alone, and do not include the nineteen flint-glass factories, which are valued at 1,298,100 dols., pay weekly wages amounting to 19,000 dols., and annually consume 2,095,896 bushels of coal, employ 2,304 hands, and make 2,000,000 dols. worth of glassware.

SMOKING AMONG THE DARFINS.—Lionel Wafer, in his account of "The Isthmus of Darien," 1702, thus writes of the Indian cigar:—"Their way of smoking is thus: they roll up the leaves of a tobacco similar to the Virginian, the outer leaves being pressed hard till the roll is as big as one's wrist; a boy lights one end and burns it to a coal, wetting the part next it to keep it from wasting too fast; the end so lighted he puts into his mouth, and blows the smoke through the whole length of the roll into the face of every one of the company or council, though there be two or three hundred. They then, sitting in their usual posture upon the forms, make with their hands, held hollow together, a kind of funnel round their mouths and

noses; into this they receive the smoke as it is blown upon them, sniffing it up greedily and strongly as long as ever they are able to hold their breath, and seeming to bless themselves as it were with the refreshment it gives them." The picture accompanying this account is very funny, as the dignified council sit and are smoked at. Each Darien wears a ring in his nose, and looks the picture of content.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN.

The following remarks of one of the principal medical men in Liverpool, Dr. Grimsdale, on the occasion of his delivering the prizes to the ladies' classes of the Liverpool Gymnasium, may not be without interest. Referring to some of those objections which always accompany the slightest innovation on, or departure from, the well-beaten path of routine, Dr. Grimsdale said:

"I am convinced that if any of these objectors are present they have already had their prejudices dispelled, for during the progress of these exercises, so remarkable for grace and elegance, I have carefully watched the spectators, and could see nothing but one unmistakable expression of satisfaction and delighted approval. If it be expected that I should give a formal opinion upon the merits of the question, I have no hesitation whatever in declaring that these exercises promote healthful and symmetrical growth of body, give increased strength, cause a decided improvement in general health, and create by that means additional and important sources of happiness. Nor do these benefits end with the recipients of them—they extend also to the homes and friends of the members, possibly even to the objectors themselves. For I am convinced that whether as sisters, wives, or mothers in the sick-room, or elsewhere, the social duties of women will be better performed by those who have gone through a course of these exercises than by those who have not."

"It has been, and no doubt is still, said that these matters are open to abuse; but though I must admit, as an abstract principle, that all good things are equally liable to be distorted from their original intention, I have yet no fear that in this institution, under the careful guidance of a gentleman as experienced as Mr. Hulley, we are likely to find a practical illustration of this tendency. Besides, I have sufficient confidence in the inherent good sense of English women to feel sure that they will carry these exercises no farther than is sufficient to make them, if possible, more womanly."

"The objections usually advanced on this subject are so extremely vague and shapeless that it is impossible to bring them to any intelligible issue; but I did hear the other day one practical and somewhat serious objection, which it is important that I should mention here. A young lady friend, to whom I happened to mention that two of my daughters were attending these classes, expressed her surprise and horror. 'Because,' said she, 'you know it makes them have such large hands and feet.' Now, this was somewhat alarming information, because one naturally has an objection to seeing one's children with hands and feet like ploughmen. I have since anxiously watched the condition of these important members, and am very glad to say that up to the present time I have not been able to detect any sensible increase of size. But even if we allow the truth of this serious objection, that gymnastic exercises may probably cause the glove number of a young lady to range somewhat higher than before, I cannot help thinking that the positive advantage of increased health, strength, and happiness will more than compensate for this formidable drawback."

THE WAGES EARNED BY THE BELGIAN COLLIERS ARE:—Helters or hewers, from 2s. 11d. to 4s. 2d. per day; exceptional men, 5s. to 6s.; wood or tree setters, 3s. 1d. to 5s.; wood-cutters or sawyers, 2s. 6d. to 2s. 11d.; loaders of coal, 2s. 6d. to 2s. 11d.; sundries, 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d.

THE WAGES EARNED IN THE BELGIUM IRON DISTRICTS ARE:—Furnace-keepers, 2s. 1d. to 2s. 11d. per day; fillers, 1s. 8d. to 2s. 1d.; box fillers, 1s. 4d. to 1s. 8d.; labourers, 1s. 5d. to 1s. 8d. In the foundries moulders get 2s. to 2s. 11d.; dressers, 2s. to 2s. 6d.; labourers, 1s. 5d. to 2s. 1d. In the forges puddlers get 4s. 2d. to 5s.; under hands, 2s. 3d. to 3s. 1d.; rollers, 4s. 2d. to 5s. 10d.; helpers, 3s. 4d. to 4s. 2d.; shearers, 1s. 10d. to 2s. 6d.; labourers, 1s. 5d. to 2s. 1d.

CHRISTMAS CUSTOM IN AUSTRIA.—The Christmas dish in Austria is a goose, of which immense numbers are slaughtered on the occasion. At Vienna the poultry-dealers decorate their shop windows with those birds, dressed up to represent in caricature individuals of a momentary notoriety. This season the majority of geese figure as Marshal Benedek or General Otm-Gallas.



[DON JOSE WOUNDS THE PIRATE.]

MARION.

CHAPTER VIII.

Oh! perfect love that dureth long!
Dear growth, that, shaded by the palm,
And breathed on by an angel's song,
Blooms on in heaven secure from harm.

Jean Ingelow.

We left Leon Valdo, Don José's steward, lying in the simple cottage which had been appropriated to him, and suffering intensely from the wounds inflicted by the Indian marksman.

When Nina had quitted his presence his thoughts followed her, and again and again he lived over all the scenes of their pleasant companionship.

During the period of Roget's probation the young man was unable to rise from his couch, and time dragged slowly by, save when Nina paid her daily visits, sitting for an hour or two at his side, moistening his lips with cordials, and fanning him with tufts of gorgeous feathers, or her own coquettish Spanish fan.

When, thanks to the physician's prescriptions and her care, he began to recover, he again wandered with her through the pleasant paths of the coffee plantation, sometimes also venturing into the fairy-like garden.

Sometimes wild words which would have revealed the secret he had thus far managed to keep rushed to his lips, but he repressed them, saying, mentally:

"Be still, heart; wait till a more fitting hour comes, and I feel more certain of her love!"

One day, however, they sat beneath a regal palm as the long tropical afternoon was melting into eventide.

The sunset light shone through the feathery branches and wove a golden splendour around the girl's graceful head.

Gorgeous birds flew by like a sudden flash of jewels, and yellow-bellied bees were still humming amid the fragrant bloom.

For several moments both had been silent, grave, preoccupied; and at length the girl said, with a dash of archness in her manner:

"A doubtless for your thoughts, señor."

The young man looked up, started from his reverie, and replied:

"Senorita, I was thinking of various circumstances connected with my illness; let me see, Señor Mora was here the very day when I was wounded, two weeks ago. Ah, I have good reason to remember his visit, there were such weighty matters connected with it."

"So have I," said the girl, without raising her eyes to his face.

"Yes, lady; and I trust you will pardon my apparent presumption when I make a few inquiries as to a subject which interests me deeply. Humble as I am, no man can be a more sincere friend than I."

"Certainly, certainly; you have proved that—ask what you will."

"Did Don Felipe renew his suit?"

"Yes."

"And are you betrothed?"

"No; I begged him to give me a week's probation, and it has lengthened into three weeks because of an accident that has happened to him during his absence."

"And why did you ask time for reflection when he was so impatient to have an answer?"

"Because I did not know my own heart," and her voice sank into a whisper.

There was a brief silence, and then her companion resumed:

"Dear, dear Nina, if Leon Valdo were anything but a steward—if he had but wealth and rank to recommend him, he would long, long ago have poured forth the story of his love. The hours spent by your father's bedside, and in your companionship since I have been employed by Don José, were the sweetest moments of my life; and while I have been ill you have grown more and more dear to me with every passing day. I know I am trespassing on your generosity, but I cannot stifle the love that clamours for utterance."

"Leon," faltered the girl, "I have had many suitors, but never did any declaration thrill me with such joy as yours, and from the hour when I heard of your peril I knew my heart; I realized how inexpressibly dear you were, and I always believed you the peer of any man in the world."

They were now interrupted by the voice of Carlos, calling Nina to the house, as her father had returned from his short journey, bringing with him Señor Mora.

A few hasty parting words were interchanged by the lovers, and then the boy loitered to watch the brilliant couple, and Nina walked on rather reluctantly, it must be confessed. She had gone but a short distance when a female figure rose before her, a small shapely hand grasped her arm, and a pair of burning eyes looked into her own.

"Nina Montello," exclaimed a voice full of weird music, "I must have a moment's speech with you."

The imperious manner in which she spoke was exceedingly irritating to the young heiress, who had thus far found her will law, but the glance bent upon

her face startled her, and she could scarcely gain the strength to reply:

"Nay, nay, 'tis impossible; I am in great haste."

A singular smile curled the woman's lip, and she continued:

"Senorita, you are accustomed to have your own way, and so am I; but listen, it is on a love-affair which deeply concerns you that I wish to speak. Stay you must, for what I have to reveal ought to have been disclosed before."

"Proceed then, but do not detain me long."

The woman drew the girl aside from the path and exclaimed:

"Nina Montello, you and your father have been basely deceived by Felipe Mora; he has not even given you his real name, and that is the least atrocious of his disguises. He is in truth a pirate chief, and master of a vessel which he has christened the Queen of the Sea, and others are cruising about under the management of a portion of his band. The ship now lies off Punta Arenas, with Spanish colours flaunting from the flag-staff; during the probation allotted him he grew somewhat fearful that his vessel was suspected, and that he might be overhauled by the Government, therefore he put out to sea, sailing as far as the rocks of Los Frailes, where he concealed his ill-gotten gains, and left four men in prison because they were too noble to become pirates."

She stopped in her rapid utterance, but though her revelation had startled and bewildered Nina, she did not speak, and the woman went on with a still more bitter emphasis.

"Senorita, a man who is not true to himself, and is false in all his movements, must be false in love; and Basil Roget, the lawless pirate, has broken more than one heart as warm, pure, and full of hope as yours. Beware how you trust him!"

"Stranger," rejoined the girl, "he has played the part to perfection, and I never suspected that he was aught than what he seems; I esteemed him as a friend, but I have no heart to give him."

"You love another, then?" and the woman leaned forward eagerly.

The girl bowed assent, her cheek crimsoning, her eye kindling, at the memory of the scene beneath the old palm-tree.

"This is glad tidings," exclaimed the stranger; "for the present I am satisfied. On, on to the house—I do not fear Felipe Mora's arts now."

"Woman," cried the girl, as she was about to dart away, "there is one thought that troubles me with regard to Señor Mora's suit, he is a great favourite with my father."

"So I have heard; and the pirate chief fancied everything would go smoothly on because Don José's sympathies were enlisted in his favour. Leave that to me, lady; believe me we will thwart him yet."

And with a musical laugh she disappeared, waving her hand in triumph.

When Nina had nearly reached the house her father sprang to meet her with fond pride, and pointing towards a walk walled in by orange-trees, exclaimed:

"Senor Mora is awaiting you there; Nina, child, I trust my hopes are to be realized, and that you have decided to accept one whom I entirely approve."

"Father," replied the girl, gravely, "if you love me, you certainly would desire my happiness beyond any earthly thing, and as Senor Mora's wife I should be utterly wretched."

"What nonsense!" cried the old gentleman, angrily; "who has put such ideas into your romantic little head?"

Tears gathered in Nina's eyes as she rejoined:

"Come with me, and I will tell you."

"What you have to say can as well be said here."

"No, no; he is not beyond ear-shot, and what I have to communicate is not in the least complimentary to him."

Slowly, and with the air of a person who is not to be convinced on a disputed point, Don José followed his daughter into the pleasant Moresque mansion, and the apartment where the young steward had so often managed to leave tokens of his presence.

"You may be assured, my dear father," said Nina, when the door had closed upon him, and they found themselves quite free from intrusion, "that the pretended Mora has played a desperate game to delude you, and gain my heart and fortune."

"Nina, what do you mean? You talk in riddles; your whole conduct is a perfect enigma."

"Listen, and I will explain—his real name is Basil Roget, his character that of a pirate chief."

"Nina, Nina, who has told you this?"

"A stranger, sir, who just crossed my path on my way to join you and your favourite."

"Ah, child," and the old man sprang to his feet in a paroxysm of rage, "it is a foul slander, and some other sutor has been scheming against Mora in my absence."

"I do not believe it, and, besides, I cannot give the slightest return to Senor Mora's love."

"Then," resumed her father, "I will take the matter into my own hands, and force you to yield to my wishes; you shall find I am a man of iron, and though you are my child, and have been very dear to me, if you trifle with me it will be at your peril. In three months you shall be Mora's bride."

Poor Nina sank fainting at his feet, but it did not move him as it would have done in days of yore.

He was in no mood to be gentle, or, I might say, fatherly, and summoning the servant to care for her, he hastened into the grounds.

Roget hurried to meet him, flushed and expectant.

"Ah! your step was so light that I thought it must be the Senorita Nina."

"She is not well enough to join you to-night," replied Don José, apologetically; "in fact, I left her in a swoon, and I think she must have been worn down by anxiety for poor Carlos, who, as they tell me, had the ill-luck to fall into a stream winding through the coffee plantation."

Roget duly expressed his regret at both these mischances, and then said:

"Prithce, Don José, can you hold out any hope for me with regard to the prize I so much covet—your daughter's heart?"

"Senor Mora," exclaimed Don José, his face reddening with anger as he spoke, "Nina's answer is not so favourable as I could have wished, but I have told her in plain language that I would not allow her to reject you, and she knows a Montello does not lightly change his purpose."

"Thank you, thank you, amigo; all my hopes of happiness in this life are bound up in her. To-night, however, I will no longer trespass on your hospitality, as I have not fully recovered from the effects of my late accident. Buena noche."

"Good-night," said Don José; "you will soon come and go with the authority of a son."

The impostor smiled, and the two gentlemen parted in the most cordial manner.

When Basil Roget had struck into the high road he muttered:

"A pest on Nina Montello—'tis no light thing to reject me, and when she is once my wife, and her fortune at my disposal, I will have my revenge for this slight! Now, now in my perplexity and disappointment, I need superhuman aid more than ever, and will hurry on to keep my appointment with Constanza the Sybil! Ha, how that woman's subtle influence first attracts and then repels me! Every time I visit her temple some expression she makes throws me

into a storm of passion, and I resolve I will never again seek her aid; but an irresistible impulse draws me back. I will not, however, acquire the habit of talking aloud—'tis a most dangerous thing for a pirate chief," and he lapsed into silence, wandering on into the tropical forest, in whose very depths the sybil dwelt.

Meanwhile, poor Nina was slowly awaking to the consciousness that a living death was before her, as the wife of one whom she could not now ever respect, and Don José had been irritated and startled by the second announcement of Basil Roget's real character from the lips of the stranger who had betrayed the secret to Nina.

"Woman," cried the old man, "nothing but the evidence of my own senses can make me believe what I regard as the foulest and most cruel of calumnies."

"That I am prepared to give you," replied the stranger.

"How, how?" faltered the old man.

"Listen, Don José: in your forest there is a small octagonal building, styled by its former occupant the Temple of Fate. There the vile impostor often goes to seek the counsel of Constanza the Sybil, and there he has an appointment to-night. Follow me thither and I will show you where you can see and hear sufficient to satisfy you of the truth of my assertion."

Don José hesitated a few moments, and then said, gravely:

"Perhaps, after all, it would be better for me and Nina to put Senor Mora to some test," and wrapping himself in his cloak, and drawing his sombrero low over his face, he followed the mysterious Constanza.

CHAPTER IX.

The brand is on his brow,
A dark and guilty spot;
'Tis ne'er to be erased,
'Tis ne'er to be forgot.

It was late when Basil Roget crossed the threshold of the little temple where Constanza had promised to await him, and entered the audience-chamber, with its dim light, its clouds of incense, its crimson drapery and golden hieroglyphics.

As he approached the arch, where his conferences had been held, he perceived Constanza's dark mæmoric eyes wearing a look which he could not interpret.

As the conversation proceeded the woman adroitly drew him out so that there was no longer a shadow of a doubt that his name was, as she asserted in her interviews with Nina and her father, Basil Roget—that he was a pirate chief, and his best vessel, the Queen of the Sea, was now anchored off Punta Arenas, and that he had recently buried treasures among the rocks of Los Frailes, this having been his reason for prolonging his absence.

He also laughingly asserted that he had been to secrete money and jewels amid the mountain gorges, when he had rescued Don José and his daughter from the ruffianly robber, and expressed his intention of going there before his marriage, as he should wish to make Nina a bridal gift; and begged to know if the sybil could not read in his horoscope whether or not he should return in safety.

"Ah," cried the sybil, "with such an heiress for your bride, it would not matter if you did not keep so strict a lookout on your own treasures, or take another piratical cruise."

"Good sybil, I love gold better than any woman in the broad universe."

"That I know," was the laconic answer.

And the pirate continued:

"I like, too, the wildness and freedom of the sea, where I am my own master and as much a monarch as any king. As soon as I secure my share of Don José's wealth, I shall take Nina on board La Reina du Mer, and then I shall fully avenge myself for the slight she has cast upon my love."

"Villanous pirate!" exclaimed a voice which rang like a bugle blast through the temple, "your secret is betrayed. I understand you, and thank heaven it is not too late to save my daughter from such a doom!"

And Don José Montello moved forward and stood towering with bitter scorn in fierce indignation before the astonished man.

For the first time during their acquaintance Roget entirely lost his self-control, and was for a few moments petrified by Montello's sudden *entrées*.

At length, however, he laid his hand upon his sword, but the scabbard was empty, Constanza's servant having taken care to remove it, lest unwelcome consequences should ensue. In a perfect frenzy of rage, he flew towards the old man, exclaiming, in a voice hoarse with concentrated passion:

"You shall answer for this, Don José."

Montello drew his sword, and all the strength and spirit of his youth seemed to return. With a cry like that of a wounded wolf Roget sank upon the floor, and moving to Constanza, Don José poured forth

his gratitude in the most eloquent language, and retired.

When he had gone that woman's imperial face bent for an instant over him, a thousand varying emotions mirroring themselves in her dark, luminous eyes, and then giving her servant a few directions relative to him, left the spot.

From that hour Constanza was never more seen in the Temple of Fate, where many strange scenes had been enacted, and her subsequent career will be developed in future chapters of our story. Her faithful slave followed her, and Roget might have terminated his guilty existence where his purposes had been so signally foiled, had not Blois, his villainous ally, chanced to pass, and removed him to his own cottage.

And Don José—what of him?

It would be impossible to give any adequate idea of the emotions which thrilled every nerve of his frame as he spurred his good steed homeward. Day was breaking with all the glory of a tropical morning when he dismounted at the hacienda, and hastening into Nina's room, flung himself at the bedside in an agony of love and regret.

"Oh, my child, my child," he exclaimed, "I have indeed been deluded, strangely deluded. A woman who, as I suppose, was no other than Constanza the Sybil, warned me not to trust Senor Mora, for he was a pirate chief, but I would not believe it till I had the evidence of my own senses. Last night I followed her into the forest, and it seems he often comes when on shore to ask counsel as to his voyages, the concealment of his treasures, and his love affairs, and there I saw and heard enough to convince me of the truth. You have had a fortunate escape, and I cannot now be sufficiently thankful you did not share my disgraceful regard."

Tears of joy gathered in the girl's eyes, and her voice was tremulously sweet, but was now and then broken by a sob, when she expressed her gratitude to the sybil for her timely revelation. There was a brief silence ere Don José continued:

"Nina, can you forgive me for my harshness, my cruelty?"

"Oh, yes, yes," and a pair of white arms were wreathed around his neck, and a mass of shining hair, escaping from the lace coil which had confined it, swept about him in rich luxuriance. Don José remained for a time with his daughter, and then left her and walked towards the coffee plantation, to see how business had progressed during his recent absence. He had not gone far when he was joined by a neighbouring planter, who, with a significant look, cried:

"Good-morning—glad to see you back, for it is high time you should look after your own affairs."

"Ah! the steward has had a severe accident since I have been away, and could not give the business much attention."

"That is not all, Don José! One near and dear to you, and as far above him as the heaven above the earth, has I fear become too much interested in a man who is a mere steward."

"Santa Maria! what do you mean?" cried the old man, drawing himself haughtily up, and fixing his flashing eyes on his companion.

"Rumour says that Leon Valdo has been making love to your daughter, and she regards him with favour, for she has daily visited him, and paid him every attention she would to an equal."

The old man's cheek reddened, his lips curled with scorn, and after a brief consultation with his neighbour he walked briskly on till he reached the steward's quarters.

"Leon Valdo!" he exclaimed, as he crossed the threshold where Nina had stood half-frozen with anguish on that memorable day which had revealed his own heart to her, as the storm-clouds immerse themselves in some mountain lake which had heretofore been clear and calm—"Leon Valdo!"

At his call the steward advanced, expecting that he might have come to thank him for the rescue of Carlos, but, on the contrary, he said:

"Your term of service is at an end; I will no longer have you on the plantation. Go, go, and never let me look upon your face again."

"And what is my offence?" asked the young man, with a dignity which offended Don José.

"Hush, hush. It is useless to enter into particulars!"

"But, Don José, I insist on knowing."

"Well, then, I left to you the care of the plantation during my absence, and on my return I find your name linked with my daughter's in common gossip. They even go so far as to assert that you have been making love to her, and that she regarded you with favour."

"Don José, I cannot refute the charge," replied the young man, while a frank smile broke over his face.

"Villain!" muttered his employer, angrily.

"Spare me your epithets till you are certain I deserve them. You may have been misled in my case

as well as in that of Felipe Mora. Wait till you hear my story," and with that princely grace which had so fascinated Nina, he led the way into the best apartment the little cottage afforded and pointed to a seat.

A long conference ensued, and when Montello reappeared he was leaning amicably on Valdo's arm, and the steward had undergone a strange metamorphosis.

His simple garments had been exchanged for a costly tunic of purple velvet, a waistcoat of white brocade, embroidered with delicate violet, flowered topboots made after the fashion of the times, giving a picturesque effect to his costume, and a jaunty cap from which floated a crimson plume.

Both appeared to be eager to reach the house, and ascending the staircase, Don José tapped at his daughter's door.

She had arisen from her huge canopied bed, and was sitting in a great ebony chair, carved with rare skill, and luxuriously cushioned with silk damask.

"Nina, I have brought you a visitor, to whom I hope you will give a warm welcome. Pray, do you know him?"

The girl blushed deeply as she replied: "He has the face, the form, the bearing of Leon Valdo, but his costume is unfamiliar."

"Never mind that," continued her father, with his most genial smile; "be assured he deserves it, and a far, far less menial position than he has hitherto occupied."

"My dear father, you once told me I spoke in riddles, and my whole conduct was a perfect enigma, and I now say the same of you."

"Hark ye, Nina," and he proceeded to communicate the nature of the errand which had drawn him to the steward's quarters, adding:

"There I listened to a most singular, a most romantic story, child, and wondered I had not before traced our steward's resemblance to the noble house of Braganza. Years ago when you and Don Leon were both children it was a cherished purpose of his father and mine to see you Don Leon's wife; and when we left our native land for Costa Rica I remember, and perhaps you may, the grief of the boy Leon; there, there, young man, you may tell the rest of the story," and the old gentleman retired, leaving the lovers alone.

"Nina," continued the young heir of Braganza, "when you had gone my heart followed you across the sea. I could not forget your image, and at length I sailed for the tropics. At the court at Madrid, where I spent two or three winters, more than one scheming duellist formed skilful plans to secure my princely fortune; but I resolved that if I ever married my bride should love me for myself alone. As time wore on the yearning to see you again grew more and more irresistible, and as your father's steward I have gained the priceless treasure of your love. He has made a thousand apologies for treating me with such indifference, yet has amply atoned for all by giving me the idol of my youth and the joy of my manhood."

But on that scene we will not linger. It is sufficient for our purpose to add that every attention was now lavished on the quondam steward, and never had there been a more brilliant wedding than when in the grand old cathedral Nina Montello spoke the vows which bound her to the young heir of Braganza.

CHAPTER X.

The ship has anchored in the bay. They've dropped her weary wings; and some have manned the boat and come away. But where is he—why don't he come?

B. F. Gould.

The protracted absence of Francis Marion and the loss of sweet Marie Videau had thrown a deep shadow over the Huguenot settlement on the banks of the Santee.

The most rigid search had been made for the missing girl, but to no purpose, and some believed she had in a moment of affright fallen into the stream, while others thought her a victim to Indian ferocity and gave her up as dead.

The Marion family not only grieved at the mysterious disappearance of poor Marie, but felt keenly anxious with regard to Francis.

Thrice his mother had gone with her husband and sons as they journeyed to Charleston, and watched the vessels anchored in the harbour and strained her gaze over the waters with a bitter yearning it is impossible to paint, and more than one fervent prayer had gone up from the family altars in the Huguenot settlement in behalf of the loved and lost.

As our readers will see, none needed the special guidance and protection of heaven more than the hero and heroine of our story.

After a long and wearisome sea voyage and receiv-

ing the most rigorous treatment from her captor and the woman who had more special charge of her, the ship anchored at an ocean isle inhabited by a few French families, exiled, not for principle, but for crime.

When Marie was allowed to disembark and walked on towards her captor's mansion, brutal oaths greeted her and she sank down like one dead.

A terrible illness ensued, and often her soul seemed to stand at the very gates of death; but at last she began slowly to recover, and once more her captor put out to sea.

During this cruise there was a new passenger—a young man who had the misfortune to be the nephew of so vile a man as Pierre Blondeau, and had, by the death of his parents in childhood, been thrown much under his influence.

At sight of his uncle's prize he started and exclaimed, with French enthusiasm:

"*Mon Dieu!* you have brought home an angel! Where, where did you find her, and what put it into your head that such a girl could ever be more than your slave?"

His uncle turned towards him and smiled grimly as he replied:

"I found her on the banks of the Santee, but I did not fall in love with her as you apparently did at the first glance. No, no, I had a secret purpose in view."

"What was it?"

"Revenge."

"How so, my dear uncle? I do not understand."

Blondeau lowered his voice and briefly told his story (which I am not yet prepared to repeat to our readers), the young man listening intently, but making no comment.

He was, however, always assiduously attentive, and when the ship again sailed he was on board.

One evening, by his uncle's permission, Marie had been allowed to go on deck, and there, by the soft moonlight bathing the waters, and with the breeze swelling the canvas, he sank at her feet and surprised her by an earnest declaration of love.

"Nay, nay," replied the girl, as he paused for a reply. "I cannot return your love, Paul Lyons." And she stopped irresolute, her face crimsoning with the sudden rush of memories which came sweeping over her.

"Ah! I see—you love another."

"Yes, monsieur."

"And who?"

"One who grew up with me on the banks of the Santee, who fought battles and pitched tents, and exerted himself to the utmost to amuse me when I was a child, and spent his last hours with me before he left the settlement to join the crew of the good ship Rover."

"A sailor boy—where is he now?"

"Heaven only knows, Paul Lyons. Ere these great calamities befell me, and I was snatched from home and friends, we began to think he had been wrecked, for no trace of the Rover could be found." And bowing her head, she wept like a child.

Lyons stood gazing at her in wonder and pain, and again he sank at her feet, and said:

"Marie, as I lay in my hammock thinking over this matter last night I thought a rejection would make me bitter and resentful; but strange as it may seem, my love has not yet changed to hatred. I pity you from the depth of my soul."

"Oh, Paul!" exclaimed the girl, "you have influence with your uncle I am certain; and I beg of you, by all you hold sacred, to have me restored to my home."

The young man hesitated an instant and then replied:

"Though I say it, my uncle is a bold, bad man, and I fear I shall not be able to move him; but be assured I will do my best."

"Heaven bless you for your kindness," faltered the girl, and they parted.

The next morning Blondeau appeared in the cabin, where she was kept under the supervision of a grim old duenna, a woman after his own heart.

"Marie Videau," he muttered, "Paul has been trying to have me put back and leave you in your home on the banks of the Santee; but, by heaven, that shall never be!"

Leaving her to the fresh sorrow which this announcement aroused, we will cast another glance at Francis Marion.

It was at the dead of night, a month after his removal to the cave of Los Frailes, that a light craft sank her anchor where the Queen of the Sea had weighed here, and a small boat with a single occupant shot towards the rocks.

Springing from the skiff he hastily moored it into a little cove which had been used by the pirates in their landings, and walked on at a brisk pace.

He was clad in the costume worn by the Capuchin Friars, the world over, and a large cross hung at his

side, suspended to his monkish robe by a chain of quaint workmanship.

Such was the figure that at the "night's still noon" unlocked the iron door of the cave where Francis Marion was incarcerated, and pausing, said with womanly gentleness in his tone:

"Heaven pity thee, my son! This dungeon is no place for you, and you had better leave it to the sea-fowl which haunt the rocks."

As he spoke he drew from the folds of his cassock a small metallic lamp, and hurriedly lighting it, cast a keen glance on the hard stone floor, the rough walls, the seaweed here and there creeping through some crevice, and the scanty furniture the prisoner had been allowed.

"Who, who are you?" asked the youth. "Is it Adrienne in disguise?"

"No, no, my lad," and the visitor shook his head dissentingly. "She is ill and consequently unable to follow you to the rocks of Los Frailes."

"Ill!" echoed the prisoner; "I am sorry to hear it, for she has shown us great kindness and begins to seem quite like a sister. Besides," and his haggard cheek flushed—"I had a boon to crave at her hands before I die, and I cannot long live in this cave. I am dying, stranger, not from physical suffering, or the slow starvation I believe he means to inflict, but of hunger of the heart." And he held up his wasted arm, revealing the thin fingers, while his wan face and the consuming lustre of his eyes attested the truth of his assertion.

"Poor Francis," exclaimed the friar, "you shall not remain here an hour longer. I will save you!"

The young man started and his chest heaved as he faltered:

"That seems too sweet to be real. Adrienne has from time to time held out hopes of release, but they have proved delusive. You could not be cruel enough to mock me with a prospect which cannot be realized."

"Follow me, and you shall soon be safe," cried the friar.

"I have four companions in an adjacent compartment of the cavern—old messmates on board the ship Rover—from whom I have been separated since our removal."

The friar hesitated an instant ere he resumed:

"I cannot take them now, but believe me I shall not lose sight of them, and the hour may speedily come when I may set them at liberty."

With these words he drew the youth's arm within his own, and led him towards the boat, rocking on the waters where he had left it.

Kindly assisting Marion to a seat in the skiff, he raised a rich cloak from the bottom of the boat and wrapped it around the wasted figure shivering in the cool sweep of the night air; then placing a velvet cap upon his head, the stranger bent to the oars, and the boat shot like an arrow towards the vessel.

Not another syllable was breathed till both stood in the cabin, when his benefactor said:

"Now I am ready to tell you who has seen fit to befriended you in your hour of need. I am Adrienne Rogét's confessor, and I know how deeply she is interested in your welfare. The poor girl has recently discovered that her father is a pirate, and the shock threw her into a high fever from which she is slowly recovering, but she is scarcely less emaciated than you."

The young man expressed his regret and the priest continued:

"During her delirium Adrienne has been haunted by many a wild dream of you, and more than once I have been called to administer extreme unction, as her attendants thought she could not live through the night; but the crisis passed favourably, and as she began to recover her thoughts wandered to you. She had, weeks before, enlisted my sympathies, for though you are not of our faith, my son, I could not have the heart of a Christian throbbing within me and not regard you with pity; and when she begged me to take the yacht which her father had left for her own pleasure, and sail on a mission of mercy to you, I needed no second invitation."

"How kind of you both," exclaimed the youth, "to do so much to free me from my leathsome bondage, but where, where is Captain Rogét, and what will he say when he knows how his daughter has rebelled against his will?"

"Hark ye, my son; the pirate chief is lying ill from the effects of wounds received in a late duel, and in the remote cottage where he has been obliged to take refuge he cannot manage affairs on board the Queen of the Sea or in his own home. There his daughter reigns queen, and thither I shall take you at her earnest request."

The confessor kept his word, and in due time the beautiful yacht anchored once more, and the boat conveyed the priest and Marion to the shore.

Two horses were procured at the door and he rode at Father Anselmo's side through the pleasant streets of the old tropical town.

"We are not to stop here in Punta Arenas now," said the priest, as they dismounted at the *posada*, to which the horses belonged—"It is not quite politic to be in a place where Roget's crew may be on the lookout, and report everything to the bold captain, lying sick under the thatched roof of Biola, once a member of his band, and a desperado of the worst type. A diligence will soon pass, and we will enter and proceed to Cartago, where Basil Roget has a residence, but as I do not like to wear my present garb through the whole journey, I will procure a disguise for myself, and you also."

The youth walked into the *posada*, taking care to retreat to a dim corner, and draw his cloak closely about his face, while Father Anselmo went to the church, where he had long been confessor.

He presently returned, however, disguised with such skill that Marion scarcely recognized him till a second glance, and drawing the youth into a small room, he proceeded to array him in a garb befitting his age and height. He then offered him refreshments, and they took their seats in the diligence.

Ere long Punta Arenas was left far behind, and the journey grew exceedingly pleasant to the young man, to whom liberty was so sweet, and the features of the landscape so striking and picturesque.

There were the mountains lifting their peaks like purple tints into the tropic sky, the bright green meadows, veined with flashing streams, wave-like, wooded hills, seamed with red cart-roads, steep bridges built of lava stone, haciendas half buried in sweet, rich foliage, wide lagoons whose waters seemed to throb in the receding sunshine, and along the margin of which the stately white cranes searched for food.

Occasionally the diligence wound through a forest, shadowy with gigantic trees and the road bordered by tall ferns, while the quetzal and the pigeons perched on the broad boughs above, the wild peacock shrieked among the thickets, apes chattered like blackbirds in the dim recesses, and the deer and hare went bounding away to still deeper solitude.

Sometimes they met a venerable padre, going to administer to some dying penitent, a muleteer with his train of mules, a *carretero* with his quaint coffee-cart drawn by huge oxen, and the *mestizos*, or peasant women, with their graceful figures; their lovely faces where the crimson of the rose blended with a pearly whiteness, their shining hair, their gay skirts and bodices, and their jaunty little hats decorated with ribbons and cockades.

At length they reached the city of Cartago, and leaving the diligence at the inn, took their way to Basil Roget's home.

It was a stately mansion, and to young Marion it seemed a perfect palace.

Graceful trees waved over it, and the wonders of tropical bloom were gathered in the enclosure.

Within, everything was light, airy, oriental; lofty arches, panels of rare wood, superb arabesque, the glitter of gold and silver, the gorgeous glass of the windows, the long mirrors, with their exquisite filigree frames, the lustre of marble and alabaster, the glow of coral, the pale gleam of amber, fashioned into vases and lamps, and other *bijouterie*, the fall of rich drapery, the lavish expenditure to be seen on every hand, bespoke the wealth of the pirate chief, and yet the visitor felt no desire to follow his calling, or surround himself with similar luxuries.

He had gone but a short distance when a gilded door turned on its hinges, disclosing a room which a queen might have coveted, and on the threshold he met a figure robed in a dressing-gown of violet velvet, with loose Turkish sleeves, sweeping back from the fair arms, and a shower of black curls gathered into a silken fillet—it was Adrienne.

As she perceived him her eyes grew moist, her lips became tremulous, and she held out her hand, exclaiming:

"Thank heaven, you are free! Welcome, a thousand times welcome, François."

Young Marion warmly expressed his gratitude at her kindness and that of Father Anselmo, and then he led her to a seat, and they talked over all which had passed since Adrienne's last visit to the prisoners in the hold of her father's vessel.

It appeared that Adrienne was not sole mistress of her father's splendid establishment at Cartago. His sister, her son and a daughter, dwelt under his roof, and Madame Fontain had the management of affairs during his absence. But the girl declared her prayers and tears had gained their sympathy, and that they had consented to assist in fitting out the yacht for sea, and would give him a reception on his arrival.

This proved true, and during Francis Marion's stay at Cartago nothing could have been more grateful than the attentions paid by every member of the family.

Father Anselmo took up his quarters in a neighbouring monastery, and made frequent visits to the home of Roget. Often, too, he invited the young man

into the cloister, and presented him to the monks, who were men of learning and refinement, whenever they chose to manifest it.

There he was shown relics of the old saints, missals superbly illuminated after the fashion of years gone by, and tomes rich in the lore of buried ages, traced on parchment, and clasped with jewels. Every brother appeared to manifest a tender interest in him, and nothing in the power of the Jesuitical fraternity was left undone to lure him within the apparently charmed circle of the Romish Church.

All the subtle influence of sympathy for his misfortunes, regard for his eternal welfare, and his own happiness and peace in the present life, were brought into play, and it must be confessed that this system was far more dangerous than the loudest anathemas pronounced by the Pope on the guilty heretics.

Ah! Francis Marion was drifting towards the whirlpool which has swallowed so many in its hungry waves, and he might have been drawn into the gulf had not the God of his fathers watched over his young heart, and many a prayer on his behalf had gone soaring up on the wing of faith from those who knew and loved him in the Huguenot settlement.

About this time the following letter was dispatched by the crafty padre, who was only seeking a base revenge for past disappointment:

"BENJAMIN MARION.—Abandon all hopes of ever again seeing your son François; he has devoted himself to the true Church, and, though young, is one of the most zealous monks in a monastery renowned for the piety of its brethren. Give him up thus early to the sacred calling he has chosen, and remember he is a firm friend of your old enemy."

"CLAUDE CHARTEUX, now FATHER ANSELMO."

(To be continued.)

CAPTAIN WORTLEY.

I, HANNAH GRAY, was twenty-one years of age. I was not very tall, nor was I very short. I was healthy, and strong, and even-tempered; and in my temperament and tastes and habits I was womanly. I was not vain, and yet I am free to confess that I often gazed into my mirror with feelings of pride and gratitude.

I had heard it whispered that I was handsome; and though I may not have claimed so much for myself, yet I felt that I was very far from ill-looking. My mother died when I was quite young, and when I was fifteen my father followed her to the land of shadows.

My father had been a merchant, doing a limited country business, and he had had a partner named Samuel Wortley, a worthy man, between whom and my parent there had existed a strong and enduring friendship.

Mr. Wortley had a son named Thomas, three years older than myself, and the last item of business my father did before he died was to make arrangements with his partner that when we had reached a proper age Thomas and I should become man and wife.

There was nothing binding in the contract, only our fathers thus expressed their wishes; and when my father gave me in charge to his maiden sister Ruth, he particularly cautioned her that Tom Wortley was to be my husband if the thing were practicable, and that I should be brought up accordingly.

After that Mr. Wortley carried on the business two years, at the expiration of which time he fell sick and died.

The business had not prospered greatly, and at his father's death Tom was left much as I had been left.

There was property enough to give him an education—perhaps enough to see him through college—but no more.

At a place called Maple Hill lived a brother of Mr. Wortley's, named Paul, and to this brother the dying man gave his son in charge.

Thomas was then a man grown, or almost that, for he was very near twenty; but as he was just prepared to enter college his father thought best to make Uncle Paul his guardian; and he did so.

And Uncle Paul was instructed that Hannah Gray was to be Tom's wife; and when he had seen the youth safely through college he was to look to the consummation of this matrimonial plan.

My aunt Ruth was a most excellent woman; a woman who believed in the dignity of labour and in the religion of usefulness; and as my disposition led me naturally to follow in her footsteps, we lived as happily together as possible.

I gave a due share of my time and attention to music and painting; but these pursuits I made my sources of recreation.

I loved to be praised for my singing and my playing, for I knew that I possessed a good voice and a

correct ear, and I was vain enough to believe that the praises were sincere.

At all events, the scholars to whom I gave instruction upon the pianoforte made rapid progress, and their parents were more than satisfied. And in this way I made some money; enough to satisfy all my wants of clothing and amusement; so that the small sum which my father left was hardly touched, save when I urged my good aunt to use it for herself.

But, after all, so thoroughly had Aunt Ruth educated me in those other departments of female accomplishment—departments in which she was eminently proficient—that I felt more pride when I was praised for my housekeeping abilities than I did when I was praised for those other things, "Who made that bread?" "Who prepared those jellies?" "Who made those pies and that cake?" "Who planned your pretty garden, and who cares for it so properly?"

The answer which my aunt always gave with pride made me feel also proud:

"Hannah did it all."

And so I grew to be one-and-twenty years of age. I might have had many offers for my hand, but two things had held me away from them.

First, I had respect enough for the wishes of my father to give his plan a fair opportunity of accomplishment; and, secondly, I had not yet seen the man whom I thought I could really love for a husband—to whom I could give my whole heart in honour and love, and upon whom I could lean with trust and confidence.

From the books which my father had left me I had gathered none of that romance which leads the mind away from the realities of every-day life and its necessities; and the teachings of my aunt had certainly not been calculated to lead to much castle-building in the air; so perhaps I was a little behind the age in my estimate of mankind in general.

If I had been told that I looked for too much in a husband I should not have disputed it, simply from the fact that I could not tell exactly what I did look for.

But—did I love Thomas Wortley? That remained to be seen. Thus far we had been like brother and sister, and in that way I loved him well enough. But could I give him that deeper love which the true wife should give to her husband? I was not sure.

One pleasant day in early autumn Thomas Wortley arrived at Ashurst, and the stage-coach left himself and his portmanteau at our door.

He had graduated, and had made up his mind to enter upon the practice of law; and he had come according to a promise made four years before, to see what arrangements, if any, should be made for our marriage.

Thomas Wortley was a fine-looking young man. He was, in short, a handsome man; as I saw him now, fresh from college, just ready for the battle of life, I could not deny that he was just such a man as most maidens with hearts free would have fancied for a lover.

But he did not quite reach my ideal. I could not tell what was lacking.

I liked him as a brother—I loved him as such—but when I thought of him for a husband his image did not fill the void.

To tell the whole story in a very few words—I did not love him as I would love the man who was to claim my reverence and trust for a lifetime.

A week passed, and during that time no two young people could be more free and happy than were we.

Tom read to me, and sailed with me on the lake, and told me stories of his college life; and I, in turn, read to him, and sang to him, and played for him upon the pianoforte.

But during this week not a word was spoken between us upon the all-important subject.

I was waiting for him to speak first, and he evidently avoided it.

At length, one day, he received a letter through the mail, the superscription of which caught my eye before he opened it.

It was in a delicate female hand, and the postmark was of the town where he had spent the past four years.

He went away to his chamber to read the letter, and I did not see him again until tea-time. In the evening he sat down by my side, and asked me if I loved him so that I wished to be his wife.

He had been schooling himself for the occasion, and spoke very calmly. I was not at all troubled, and replied with equal calmness.

I told him that was not the way in which the proposition should be put. It was for him to make the declaration—not to extort it from me.

"But," said he, "suppose I have no declaration to make?"

"Then," I answered, "I should advise you not to make one."

"Hannah," he cried, after a pause, and seizing my

hand as he spoke. "I beg you to be frank with me. I love you—I love you dearly—and I should be very miserable if I thought any act of mine could bring you unhappiness; but you are more like a sister to me than—than—"

He hesitated as though lost; but at length, with an effort, he went on:

"Would it pain you if I should tell you that I could not honestly ask you to become my wife?"

My look must have shown him how happily relieved I was when I replied:

"My dear Tom, it would not pain me at all."

"Ha!" he exclaimed, with beaming face, "your heart is already given away?"

"Only to you and my good aunt," I said.

"Hannah!"

"I speak truly, Tom. You are the only man I really love; but I love you so like a good brother that I fear the whole might be spoiled if I took you for a husband."

And so we came soon to understand one another. Tom finally confessed that he loved a pretty girl in Cambridge, and I told him that the very fact of our parents having fixed upon our marriage had led me to regard him so in the light of something that had belonged to me from childhood, that I could only give him the place which, as a child, I had held for him—the place of a brother.

"I don't know what Uncle Paul will say," mused Tom; "but I shall write to him this evening, and I may of course tell him that you do not want me for your husband."

"Tell him the whole truth," said I.

And Tom said he would.

Three days after that Tom received a letter from his uncle, and this is what was written:

"TOM WORTLEY.—You have gone entirely beyond your scope. What right have you to send me such word? I do not receive it. Your father gave your interests into my hands, and you may be sure I shall look out for them if I can. I sent you down to Ashurst to make arrangements for your marriage with Hannah Gray; and those arrangements you will make. I have not seen Miss Gray since her father died, but I know that she is just what you need for a wife. I have kept myself informed upon the subject through reliable sources, and I know that she is all that you could ask, and much more than you deserve. But I am in no mood for trifling. I am coming down to attend to the matter myself; and of one thing you may rest assured—If you do not marry with Hannah Gray not one penny of my property shall ever be yours—unless I greatly change my mind. I shall be there very shortly. I do not send you my love in this letter; nor shall you have it until you obey your
UNCLE PAUL."

"Well," said Tom, after he had read the missive, "what do you think of it?"

"Really," I answered, "I cannot judge so well as you can. I do not know your uncle."

"He is a perfect old tiger!" declared Tom; "and when he says a thing he means it. Still you can see, even in this letter, the impress of a good heart. He will come here, as he has promised; and he will seek to force the union upon us. He has made careful inquiries touching your habits and character, and he fancies that you are about perfect. There is no use in me saying anything to him. You must meet him, Hannah."

"Your uncle is not a married man, Tom?"

"No. He's a regular old bachelor. He doesn't know anything about love. I think he did, when a mere boy, fall in love with a little doll of a girl that went to school with him. It was a regular piece of romance. The girl died, and Paul went off to sea; and the sea he followed for more than twenty years; and I don't suppose he has ever looked upon a woman with the thought of love since that early time. He is a good man, and means well. But it will be all right when he understands how you feel about the matter. You'll tell him, won't you, Hannah?"

And then Tom went on to tell me about the girl he had left in Cambridge—how good she was—how he loved her—and how she loved him. I told him I would do my best to advance his interests in that direction.

We expected that Uncle Paul would arrive on the next day, and I prepared myself to meet him. I saw that Tom was afraid of him, and that the work of pacification must rest upon my shoulders. I had a dim recollection of Capt. Paul Wortley, as he came to visit his brother at my father's place when I was a little girl—a stout, broad-shouldered, dark-faced man. Of course he had grown to be an old man now, and was probably testy and self-willed. But my course was plain; and if, when I had told him the truth, he chose to find fault, I could not help it.

On the afternoon of the following day Uncle Paul came. He had left his valise at the hotel, but my aunt would not listen to his stopping there. She had room enough, and he must be her guest. He told

her he would see about it. I was busy in the kitchen when he came, but before tea I went into the parlour with my aunt to see him. He was sitting at the pianoforte thumbing the keys when we entered.

"Captain Wortley, this is my niece, Hannah Gray." Paul Wortley arose, and as he moved towards me I remembered him very well. If I had met him in India I should have known him.

The same robust, magnificent form, the same broad, compact shoulders, the same full, swelling bosom, making room for the great heart that throbbed within, the same frank, brave face, the same dark, lustrous gray eyes, and almost the same glossy brown curls that had clustered above his broad brow in those other years. His beard, which he wore full, was slightly tinged with silver, but there were very few touches of the silvering pencil in those brown curls.

He greeted me kindly, and in a short time we were conversing freely together. He remembered me as the child whom he had held in his arms years before, and he laughingly told me that he should claim the privilege of regarding me as a child still. I might call him Uncle Paul, and I must not be afraid of him.

Where was my old man? Certainly not in this visitor. And, come to reckon up the years, he was only two-and-forty. Just in the full vigour and prime of manhood. He had been always temperate and circumspect, regarding his health as a precious blessing, and now, with the sunshine and the frosts of two-score-and-two years upon him, he was younger by far than one-half of those who call themselves young men.

After tea Uncle Paul and I walked out into the garden, and fearing that he might broach the subject of my marriage with Tom, I kept him busy upon other topics.

At first I found some difficulty, as he was inclined to answer only in monosyllables, but finally I led him on to tell me of the sea, of ships, and of other countries, and he talked until I became spell-bound with interest.

He saw that my interest was real and eager, and he became touchingly eloquent in his varied narrative. By-and-by I asked him:

"Uncle Paul, do you love music?"

"I am very fond of it," he said.

"Then," I cried, in the fulness of my heart, "if you will tell me of your adventures in far-off lands, I will play and sing for you."

I meant nothing then—nothing more than to please and entertain a man for whom I had conceived a very strange friendship.

In the evening Uncle Paul held me to my promise, and I certainly had no reason to find fault with the praise he bestowed upon me.

He said but very little in words. He was strongly demonstrative, but not in much speech. His eager attention when I sang, and the gentle, regular tapping of his foot upon the carpet when I played some of his favourite airs, told me that he was more than pleased.

From this hour there seemed to be a mysterious sympathy between Uncle Paul and myself.

I call it mysterious because it came so suddenly and unexpectedly, and yet so quietly and so naturally—because it was something deeper than friendship—something more ardent than springs from even close relationship.

Uncle Paul stopped with us a week, and when I was busy in the kitchen he wandered off in the garden, and when I found time to sit in the parlour he was sure to be with me.

At first he loved to sail with me upon the lake, but lately he seemed to prefer the quiet of the house.

When we went in the boat Tom bore us company, and I fancied that Uncle Paul did not like it.

And I, foolish girl, was glad when Tom was away, so that I could have Uncle Paul all to myself.

I did not know then exactly how I loved him, only I knew that in him I had found my beau ideal.

He was all I sought in the man I was to love and honour, and even his years were as a breastwork of strength and experience, which should be to me a safe and sure protection while I rested upon his stout, strong bosom.

I think I may safely say that I loved him when I first saw him.

You may wonder that I could fail to love the gallant, handsome nephew, and turn to the uncle with my maiden heart.

I can only answer, such was my nature.

I loved Tom as a brother, but there was something grand and noble in the uncle—something upon which my soul could cling with hope and promise.

But—nonsense! Uncle and nephew would go away together, and then what would become of poor me? It was a pleasant dream—that was all!

One day—in the afternoon—Tom came to me in great trepidation and trouble.

"Hannah, has Uncle Paul ever spoken to you about our marriage?" he asked.

"Not a word," I told him.

"Well," he continued, "he has spoken to me, and with a vengeance."

"Is he angry?" I asked, with surprise.

"No," replied Tom, shaking his head sadly and solemnly. "If he had been angry I could have met him on equal footing. He seems grief-stricken and melancholy. He says I must marry you and take you to Maple Hill. I have told him of my love elsewhere, and he shakes his head. He will not attempt to force me. I am my own master. I may marry as I please, but if I marry another than you he will go to sea again. Upon my word, he acts strangely. It worries me. Why, he even shed tears when he talked to me. He says he is not fit to live on shore. He might go to sea at any rate. If I will take you for my wife he will give to you and me his estate of Maple Hill, and he will come and visit us whenever he lands in port upon this side of the ocean; but if I take another wife he will go away and never come home any more. I had no idea that Uncle Paul was getting so childish. Goodness gracious! won't you see him, Hannah? If you tell him that you won't have me it may pacify him."

I said as little on that occasion to Tom as possible, for I was too deeply moved. I will not profess an obtuseness which was not mine. When Tom had told me all I thought I understood it. Ah, was it childishness, or was it a tender, devoted love, stirring his great heart to its uttermost depths, and yet held by him as hopeless? A love like that which he buried in the grave of the bright-eyed school-girl before I was born—a love which had smouldered in his bosom till now. I prayed heaven that I might know.

I went away to my chamber, and when I was alone I knew that I loved Paul Wortley with the whole ardour of my young heart—that I could love him always, and that I wanted no other love. But could he ever know it?

In the evening Uncle Paul found me alone in the parlour. My aunt had gone out to visit a sick neighbour, and Tom was away.

"Hannah," he said, in a low, quivering voice, such as a strong man uses who is trying to subdue some mighty emotion, "I have something to say to you." And he drew me down by his side upon the sofa, and he held one of my hands while he went on—held it as though he had a fatherly right.

"Hannah, I must be brief, and speak to the point. You know the plan which your father and Tom's father set their hearts upon?"

I made no reply save the assent of silence.

"They meant that you should marry. Now tell me—will you be Tom's wife and come and live at Maple Hill?"

"I cannot be Tom's wife," I replied.

I know that my hand trembled, and yet Paul held it. "Cannot!" he echoed, as though he were stricken with some sudden pain.

"I cannot," I repeated.

He let my hand fall and brushed his open palm across his brow.

"Then your heart is given to another. I had not thought of that."

The words fairly burst from his lips, and the sobbing, stifled tone revealed to me all the pain he felt. I felt sure that he loved me—that he would see me married to his nephew, and that he would then go to sea, that he might not be near to covet that which belonged to another.

He loved me, and he fancied that I, in my youth, could not love him in return as he would be loved. Oh! how I loved and blessed him at that moment, and how I yearned to throw myself upon his bosom, and feel those strong arms fold me to his heart! What should I say?

Presently, while my head was bowed in silence, he arose and walked across the room. By-and-by he stopped, and said:

"Well, well, you are not to blame. We know not what may come of sorrow and disappointment in this life; I have had my share, heaven knows! Maple Hill and Maple Hall must go a-begging for a mistress. Tom may have his way, and I—I must find my home at sea once more. I shall be better off there. Hannah, my dear child, I hope you may be happy! Heaven bless and keep you always!"

He had approached and taken my hand, and I had arisen to my feet.

"Sometimes," he went on, "when I am away, you will, looking out from your happy, peaceful home, think of the poor old—"

He stopped as though his voice had failed him, and I, unable longer to restrain the emotions that were surging within, sank forward upon his bosom. I wept and sobbed like a little child, and when his stout arms entwined me I pillowed my head upon his breast with a wild, yearning prayer that I might find rest there for all my life. After a time he spoke:

"Hannah! Hannah! look up into my face! Is this a crazy dream, or am I blessed for ever? Do not laugh at me—do not scorn me! Look up! Speak to me! just one word! Hannah!"

I looked up through my tears, and I pronounced his name. I called him—
"Paul!"

What a flood of holy, rapturous light suffused his noble face as I spoke.

"Do you love me?" he asked.

"Yes," I answered.

"Well enough to be my wife?"

"With all the strength of my heart—with a love that I never felt before, and with a love I can never feel for another."

"And you will be mistress of Maple Hall?"

"If you will take me for your wife, I will be mistress of your house, let it be where it will."

Once more upon his bosom—the truth all told—once more the pledge of love—and then we were as happy as happy could be, and we talked such childish talk that I dare not repeat it.

On the following morning, in the presence of myself and my aunt, Uncle Paul addressed his nephew.

"Tom," he said, "I have had some conversation with Hannah Gray, and I am satisfied that she cannot be your wife. You can go to Cambridge when you like, and you can marry whom you please, and if you marry a good and honourable girl I will do well by you. Aye, you may even call Maple Hall your home until you can find a better, but your wife cannot be its mistress. I am not going off to sea again, am I, Hannah?"

He held out his hand to me, and as I took it he drew me to him and held me against his bosom.

"Eh!" cried Tom, utterly confounded.

"Can you guess the secret?" asked his uncle.

But the proud and happy light that beamed upon the good man's face kept Tom from making any light remark, and when he spoke his words were honest and sincere.

"My dear uncle, as heaven is my judge, I believe you have won a prize richer by far than any that you ever won! So it is well for you, after all, that I have only loved her as my sister."

That was years ago.

To-day, as I sit by the deep oriel window that overlooks the broad park of Maple Hall, sometimes touching my pen to the paper before me, and anon looking down upon a stout, comely youth, who is taming a restive colt—a youth who calls me mother—my husband comes gently to my side, and lays his hand upon my shoulder. He, too, had been watching our boy.

"My darling," he says, "do you know that I love you better and better as the years roll on?"

And his words do but echo the sentiments of my own soul; for surely no love can be stronger and more enduring than is that which binds me to him. And I know that no man can be more worthy of love than is my Paul. S. C. J.

BEST TIME FOR MENTAL EXERTION.—Nature has allotted the darkness of the night for repose, and the restoration, by sleep, of exhausted energies of the body and mind. If study or composition be ardently engaged in towards that period of the day the increased action of the brain which always accompanies activity of mind requires a long time to subside; and if the individual be of an irritable habit he will be sleepless for hours, or tormented by unpleasant dreams. If, nevertheless, the practice be continued, the want of refreshing repose will ultimately produce a state of irritability of the nervous system approaching to insanity. It is therefore of great advantage to engage in severe studies early in the day, and devote two or three hours preceding bed-time to light reading, music, or amusing conversation.

DEATH OF A YOUNG MARRIED LADY WHILE WALTZING.—A Vienna correspondent relates the following melancholy story: "At a ball the other evening a very charming and accomplished young lady, the wife of Ernest von Teschenburg (the editor of the *Weiner Zeitung*), was leaving the supper-room with her husband, intending to return home. Whilst crossing the ball-room, where a brilliant waltz was being played, a friend asked her to take a single turn round the room. The temptation was too great to be resisted; so, consigning her husband to her husband, she joined the dancers, and was whirled off with great rapidity by her partner. She had scarcely got half round the huge circle when she fell from his arms as though struck by a thunderbolt—dead. They raised her from the ground gently, and carried her into another room. A dozen doctors were in attendance, and every expedient that science could suggest was tried to restore consciousness to the fair young form lying so strangely still in its gay toilet. All was in vain. She was dead. A smile upon her lips, flowers in her hair. I have now witnessed three sud-

den deaths in ball-rooms—the first two were, if possible, even more terrible than the last. In the first case, a lovely girl was shot through the heart by the man she was engaged to; in the second, the belle of the ball was burnt to death before her garments, which had caught fire whilst she was being whirled past the open fire-place, could be torn off. But the tragical episode of yesterday morning is rendered more melancholy than either by the remembrance that two little children, the eldest not three years old, are left motherless by the consequences of a waltz."

MARGARET'S WEDDING.

THE garden was all a perfect bower of roses, where the larks and the sunbeams and the morning breezes were making merry, and I ran out in the dew to gather a few of the freshest and pinkest buds for my hair, for it was Sister Margaret's bridal morning, and an airy white dress and gloves with lace ruchings at the wrist were waiting for me, spread out temptingly upon the bed in my own room upstairs, and I was in a great flutter of pleased excitement. It was a wonderful day for me, for I had never yet appeared in full dress, and I felt my importance greatly. I was only fourteen, but I was next in age to Margaret, and hereafter I should rejoice in the title of Miss Walsingham, and in those days it was the height of my ambition to be considered a young lady.

There were two whole hours yet before the bridal party were to start for the church, but I was so impatient to be dressed that I could not wait. By ten o'clock I was in the full glory of my dainty new gown, sash, ribbons, gloves and all, in spite of the unwillingness of Janet, the maid, who refused, at first, to assist me until a reasonable hour, but I gave her no peace until she yielded, and my hair was satisfactorily arranged with the rosebuds.

Emerging from my room, I met Margaret crossing the hall in her morning wrapper, her hair combed simply behind her ears. She had not commenced to dress yet.

"Why, Lou, dressed so soon!" she exclaimed, with surprise. "Don't you know that your flowers will all wither before it is time to go? and, if you're not very careful, you'll tumble your dress. Try and sit still awhile, for once, and you can have fresh flowers by-and-by. What induced you to blossom out so early, my dear?"

After admiring myself for awhile in the great hall mirror I concluded to follow her advice, and settled myself very carefully in the window-seat, that not a fold of my pretty dress should be tumbled.

What a bright day it was! The doors and windows were all wide open, the pleasant winds nestling the curtains and wafting a perfect flood of perfume through the house. It seemed as if the sunshine were brighter and more golden than its wont as it streamed into the hall, and the birds were never so jubilant before about the lonely old place; the robins, linnets and sparrows sang and twittered away as if eager to make known to us some happy secret, and the wind was telling something very sweet to the linden leaves.

Every face looked wonderfully happy, too, even papa's; it wore a light-hearted, joyful expression that I had never seen there before. He had been absent a long time, and had returned just in time to be present at the bridal. I thought his voyage must have been very beneficial to him.

There was usually something like a shadow hovering about Walsingham Place, a skeleton in the house; and even we merry children felt its presence—perhaps it was all the influence of the gloom in papa's face.

When he passed through the room every merry voice was hushed. Margaret began to be deeply absorbed in a book! Tom gathered up his toys and ran, and I followed him, never feeling free until thick walls intervened between me and papa. Not that he ever reproached us in our somewhat noisy mirth, but there was something in his presence; we never felt like ourselves when he was by.

Margaret seemed to be his favourite, or, at least, he sometimes spoke to her, and noticed her in various ways, but he never seemed aware of the presence of Tom or me, though he was very indulgent in his way, and did everything to promote our welfare. He was a strange, cold, silent man, remaining almost entirely by himself in his study, absorbed in books, rarely receiving visitors, himself seldom or never visiting.

Our great drawing-rooms were opened on very rare occasions, and the sound of music and dancing was never heard in the hall, though Elizabeth, an old family servant, told us of a time, when our mother was living, when the rooms were always filled with guests, and sparkling with lights, and resounding with music at night.

There were courtly gentlemen, and beautiful ladies shining with silk and jewels, making the floor ring with their tiny heeled boots as they glided about in

the dance, and our mother was the gayest, the most beautiful of them all. Elizabeth was the only one who ever told us of our mother—she died years ago, when I was a baby. A beautiful, bright young French lady, who went singing about the house like a bird. I was the very picture of her, Elizabeth said, only not as handsome; but I had her hair, her eyes, her expression. Margaret was more like papa.

She died very suddenly, while on a visit to her own land. She went away in the perfect bloom of health, gay with anticipations of happiness at the prospect of seeing her own blue skies again, but in a few months papa came home alone, stricken with grief, to his motherless little ones.

Margaret and I wondered why grandma was so unwilling to speak of her.

Whenever we ventured to ask of our dear dead mamma—if she loved us very much, and who was like her—she silenced us in a manner so unlike herself; and, as for papa, he was never known to mention her name; but some persons have a strange aversion to speaking of their dead.

We children loved to talk of her.

We sang the old songs which she left in the music-room, yellow with time, just because she sang them with her gay young voice so long ago. We loved the old piano which she had touched so often with her light fingers.

Everything that had been hers was very precious to us.

Margaret could just remember her as some light figure floating about in bright colours, and romping with her like another child, in the halls; but the remembrance was very indistinct, for Margaret was but five years old when she went away.

It was pleasant to think of her as being so bright and young.

As I sat there in the window, trying to wait patiently until it was time for the wedding, I was startled to see papa pacing up and down the garden walk with a strange lady on his arm.

A slight, elegantly dressed lady with dark hair.

Who could it be?

I had never seen papa, in my whole life, even conversing with a lady out of the family before, and they seemed to be so familiar and confidential—she with her face lifted to his, and he looking down upon her with an expression of fondness, if papa's face could express that.

They came up quite near the house, just beneath the window, where I was sitting, then turned back suddenly, and went down the path in the shrubbery again.

"It may be some relative who has come to attend the wedding," I thought; but papa was not usually more friendly and social with his relatives than with other people.

It was certainly very strange. Could it be that he was going to marry again? The very thought of such a thing made my cheeks burn with indignation.

Terrible stories of the atrocities committed by step-mothers flitted through my mind.

What right had he to bring a strange, disagreeable woman to rule over our house, and break up our pleasant little family? It was too much to be endured.

Just then Uncle Irving's carriage drove through the gateway, and I ran down to greet my cousin Marion, who was my great friend; and in comparing toilets with her and showing her Marion's beautiful presents I soon forgot the strange lady who had caused me so much uneasiness.

The drawing-rooms were beautifully decorated with flowers, and while Marion and I were walking about, admiring everything, papa came in alone in a white vest and with a white rose in his button-hole.

Could it be papa, though? for his face really sparkled, and his eyes had a happy light which made him look almost young. I had always fancied him very old before. The strange lady had disappeared, as suddenly as she came, and I wondered if I hadn't been dreaming when I saw her with papa from the window.

This had been a strange day, so far, and I wondered what would be the end of it, when papa came up and smoothed my hair, caressingly, and then kissed me tenderly upon the forehead for the first time since my remembrance.

At twelve o'clock we proceeded to the church, and in the church aisle I again caught a glimpse of the strange lady, this time leaning upon Uncle Irving's arm, instead of papa's.

Margaret was very lovely in her snowy bridal dress, as she stood with her sweet downcast face by the altar, and made the responses in clear, distinct tones. She was a splendid, stately girl, with a pure, pale face, and eyes almost purple in their deep, dreamy blue, like fringed gentians. Mr. Carlton seemed very

proud of her, and well he might. I did not think him half handsome enough for her, but he had a good, manly face, and a fine figure, and if Margaret were satisfied it was all very well.

In a few minutes the service was over, the organ commenced playing the Wedding March, and we were preparing to leave the church, when, suddenly another couple came up and stood before the altar, Papa and the strange lady and Dr. Graves proceeded calmly to read over a second marriage service, and Hubert Walsingham and Margaret Vincent were united in the holy bonds of matrimony.

Margaret Vincent! that was our own mother's maiden name. A murmur of surprise ran through the little assembly. Grandmamma was as pale as death, and Margaret trembled like a leaf, with her face hidden in her handkerchief. People were looking in each other's faces, as if bewildered. Everything seemed like a dream. The organ broke out again into a burst of triumphant music as the bridal party swept down the aisle and out of the church.

We all hastened immediately to our carriages. Grandmamma and Tom and I rode home together, but grandmamma was silent, and I was too bewildered to speak or to heed Tom's energetic ejaculations.

When we arrived home Margaret was sobbing in the strange lady's arms, and papa's arm was encircling them both. Then, suddenly, everyone seemed to go frantic. We all wept, we all laughed, we embraced each other a hundred times. The strange lady's tears fell upon my cheeks like rain, and she called me over and over again her own little Lou. Tom was in the scene, too, sobbing with the rest, until he remembered that he was a young gentleman, and going to college next month, and escaped and whistled.

But we could hardly realize that this was really our own mamma whom we had lamented as being dead for so many years. I was sure that I was dreaming, as I listened to her soft voice, and felt her warm white arms about my neck.

We do not know the story of her separation from papa to this day.

They did not see fit to tell us. We only know that they were divorced and united again after a space of fourteen years.

Mamma weeps over her old wicked wilfulness, but papa soothes her, saying:

"But, my dear, I was as much to blame as you were; don't let us speak of those gloomy days any more, but be as happy as we can be now."

Then she smiles and grows radiant again.

I think I understand all, now that I understand the character of each.

But the clashing chords which jarred so between them then are turned to the most perfect harmony now; there never were such golden marriage links as those that bind those two souls.

That day we all remember as the happiest one in our lives. There was the dear face we had missed so long, and never expected to look upon again in this world, opposite papa's at the family board.

Not the bright young face which we had seen in our fancy; the once sparkling eyes wore a sorrowful, subdued expression, and the scarlet lips had lost their vivid tint, but the bright wavy hair had not one silver thread, and the smile was as tender and bright as a girl's.

She had not lost all her old, quick, playful ways, or her taste for warm, bright colours.

Ah, how many years had past since she last sat there in that dear old room?

The little girl who prattled in her little chair by her side then had grown to be a woman now, taller and stouter than herself, and the two-year-old boy and baby girl, who were creeping about in the nursery then, tiny, helpless things, were almost men and women now, grown out of her knowledge in all those years.

Thank heaven, no chair had been made vacant—the little family were all there. Even Tom had lost his appetite on the occasion. The tempting wedding-viands were almost untasted. We could only look into each other's faces and smile, and think how happy we were.

In the evening we all gathered in the old sitting-room, and a little fire was lighted on the hearth, as it used to be in the cool summer evenings of long ago, and mamma opened the piano and commenced to sing one of her old songs; but the sweet voice broke suddenly, and great tears came dripping down over the old yellow keys. She got up and laid her head upon papa's breast.

"Oh, Hubert," she said, "I am too happy. I cannot bear it."

And we all left the room—we were too happy—we could not bear it.

THE AMUSEMENTS OF GENTLEMEN.—"Have you ever observed, Grace," said Miss Dale, "how much amusement gentlemen require, and how imperative it is that some other game should be provided when one

game fails?" "Not particularly," said Grace. "Oh, but it is so. Now, with women, it is supposed that they can amuse themselves or live without amusement. Once or twice in a year, perhaps, something is done for them. There is an arrow-shooting party, or a ball, or a picnic. But the catering for men's sport is never-ending, and is always paramount to everything else. And yet the pot game of the day never goes off properly. In partridge time the partridges are wild, and won't come to be killed. In hunting time the foxes won't run straight—the wretches. They show no spirit, and will take to ground to save their brushes. Then comes a nipping frost, and skating is proclaimed; but the ice is always rough, and the woodcocks have deserted the country. And as for salmon—when the summer comes round I do really believe that they suffer a great deal about the salmon. I'm sure they never catch any. So they go back to their clubs and their cards, and their billiards, and abuse their cooks and blackball their friends."—*The Last Chronicle of Barset. By Anthony Trollope.*

WOMAN.

"WOMAN, woman! she is truly a miracle. Place her amid flowers, foster her as a tender plant, and she is a thing of fancy, waywardness, and something of folly—annoyed by a dewdrop, festered by the touch of a butterfly's wing, ready to faint at the rustle of a beetle. The sophisms are too rough, the showers too heavy, and she is overpowered by the perfume of a rose-bud. But let real calamity come, arouse her affection, enkindle the spirit of her heart, and mark her then! How her heart strengthens itself; how strong is her purpose.

Place her in the heat of battle, give her a child, a bird, anything she loves or pities, to protect, and see her in a related instance, raising her white arms as a shield, and as her own blood crimson her upturned forehead, praying for life to protect the helpless. Transplant her into the dark places of earth, awaken her energies to action, and her breath becomes a healing, and her presence a blessing; she disputes inch by inch the stride of the stalking pestilence, when man, the strong and brave, shrinks away pale and affrighted.

Misfortune daunts her not; she wears away a life of silent endurance, or goes forward with less timidity than to her bridal. In prosperity she is a bud full of imprisoned odours, waiting but for the winds of adversity to scatter them abroad—pure gold, valuable but untried in the furnace. In short, woman is a miracle, a mystery!"

"SI, SENORITA, SI."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE weather was dull and murky. Heavy squalls came up occasionally from almost every quarter of the heavens.

On the second day after Beall had been taken on board there was an unusual succession of thunder-clouds, accompanied by frightful waterspouts, where black volumes of whirling elements moved here and there over the darkened surface of the ocean, with a sound as awful as the sight of them was appalling.

The stately ship, now stationary in the calm with flapping sails, now dashing along with a brisk gale behind, and then close-hauled with scarcely fifty yards of canvas on her, bending to the fierce gale and dashing wild the white foam, with such a master as Decatur, swerved not from her true course, but rolled along as if conscious of her destiny; or she was led by the genius of that goddess which the people of her country had set up in their temples, whose qualities they had chosen to represent by the gilded eagle with outspread wings, that clung with ragged claw to a bundle of arrows, and looked down with piercing eye upon the sparkling sea from the majestic stem.

Noble ship! Glorious commander! Brave sailors! We will cherish your bright deeds as our best inheritance.

But the waterspouts increased, and on several occasions would doubtless have dismasted the good old frigate, had not the timely discharge of firearms exploded the frightful monster when they had come within pistol-shot of the vessel.

But it was not ordained that the English man-of-war should perish by one of these frightful whirlwinds of the ocean. There was in store for her a far brighter and better destiny.

Towards the evening the sky brightened, the dark clouds wore away, the heaving of the sea became more regular and less agitated, and the sun went down, if not in a "blaze of glory," at least beneath a serene horizon.

It began to grow dark, and the ship was driving along at the rate of three or four knots, when the

look-out gave the intelligence that a boat, with human beings in it, might be seen over the windward bow.

All hands turned their eyes in that direction, and, beyond the shadow of a doubt, the fact was, as the watch had stated, there were seven persons, all making signs to attract the attention of those on board the ship.

Decatur was on deck himself, and immediately had the yards braced up and the vessel put close by the wind, while a boat was at once dispatched to rescue the unfortunate sufferers.

Beall stood by the rail, watching with great solicitude the scene that was transpiring. Misfortune, often his own master, had taught him in the trying school of experience how to feel for others, and he watched and waited to assist the wretched shipwrecked ones on board the high-railed ship, when the boat should bring them alongside.

The poor, weary sufferers, overwhelmed with joy, were eager to clamber up the man-ropes, clutching nervously at the hand of Beall, that was thrust down vigorously to reach them.

Among the unfortunates were Delfosse, Miller, and the cabin-boy.

Miller, the second to crawl up the ladder (the half-dead cabin-boy being raised up first), at a glance recognized his old commander and friend, and clung to his neck with a wild frenzy that astonished the beholders.

But when our hero saw that Delfosse came next, he at first, as if conscious that he had acted unfairly with the best of men, stepped back; until Delfosse, seeing that it was he, held out his hand, and, with a look that had all the brother in it, exclaimed:

"My dearest friend!"

The Englishman could contain himself no longer, but instantly rushed forward and grasped the hand of the Frenchman. They both wept like children; and amidst the general amazement of the commander and his officers and men, they were all sent to the storeroom to be cared for.

The ship was headed for the Azores. Delfosse was reclining on a settee, having been comfortably dressed, and Beall was standing gazing at him with a calm and quiet listlessness that gave him the appearance of a picture rather than a human being.

Miller was already as good as ever, and although he was burning to tell Beall of his adventures and deep agony at the intelligence of his capture, had, nevertheless, yielded to the promptings of his extreme modesty, and sought the deck to make himself acquainted with the jolly sailors of his own nation. The cabin-boy was lying in a berth near by, not yet recovered from his exhaustion.

"Why, dearest of friends," said Delfosse, addressing himself to Beall, "although I was looking hard for you, I did not expect to find you under circumstances like these, and would not have done so had it not been for that ugly squall that wrecked our own vessel."

"But were you indeed looking for me?" asked Beall, starting up.

"Yes, for you, for Isabel, for her mother! Where are they?"

"Alas, my good Delfosse, I cannot tell," sighed the wretched man.

Delfosse raised himself half erect, then balancing himself, arose to an upright position, while Beall was briefly relating the circumstances of his capture until the beginning and end of his exile on the solitary key.

"But you do not mean to say they are lost for ever?" exclaimed the Frenchman.

Beall trembled at the wild expression of the other's face, so naturally tranquil and pleasant.

"I fear they are," the Englishman replied, averting his face.

"Then my happiness is for ever blasted!" exclaimed Delfosse, in an agony.

The cabin-boy groaned heavily—Beall was agitated, perceiving his uncomfortable position.

Delfosse, with tears standing in his clear blue eyes, addressed him thus, holding out his two arms as if to embrace him.

"Oh, my friend, come here; kneel at my feet, we will weep together. We both loved her, Beall, but I had learned to look upon her only as a sister. For you, for you alone I weep. I had prayed that I might live to place her hand in yours, and see you smile upon her as your own; then, then would my happiness have been complete."

"And you, Delfosse?" gasped Beall.

"Would have rejoiced to see you and her at the consummation of all your dearest hopes."

"Oh, heaven!" muttered Beall. "How ungrateful I have been! Delfosse, I never thought till now the human heart could be so full of honour that there was no room left for selfishness. Henceforth I will call thee brother, and thou shalt be parted from me no more."

In the forenoon of the next day a ship was despatched to windward, and as soon as she was aware of the presence of the English vessel she hove to, as if to wait for her.



[THE RESCUE OF DELFOSSE AND HIS COMPANIONS.]

A few hours' sailing brought the English vessel within full view, and at long range of the stranger.

Captain Decatur, who never approached a vessel in disguise, was flying the English ensign from the mizen-peak.

As yet the other had not shown his colours; but presently clewing up his light sails, and making preparations, as if for an attack, he fired a twelve-pounder at the Englishman, and at the same time displayed the Stars and Stripes.

There was no longer any doubt as to the character of the strange sail; and Decatur, now ready and anxious for the conflict, watched the manoeuvres of his enemy with thrilling interest.

Being dead to leeward, he had to beat up towards the Yankee; while the latter, having all the advantage of position, did nothing else but wear his ship from one tack to the other, and fire broadside after broadside at his adversary, thus wasting his ammunition, and tiring his men, while the dauntless Decatur was thinking of nothing else so much as to get near enough to him for every shot to take effect.

This occasion at last presented itself; and with a shout from the impatient crew, the red fires leaped out from the frowning ports, until the whole ship seemed wrapped in lurid flames. Between the intervals, and even above the roar of the guns, the voice that had mingled with the ring of the Turkish cimeter in the Bay of Tripoli could be distinctly heard in tones that thrilled the hearts of the toiling men, who, careless of death, thought only of the dear ones in the far-off land of their birth, and the flag that waved above them.

Notwithstanding the admonitions of the commander, Beall and Delfosse would remain on the upper deck to witness the battle. Miller worked with the men at one of the guns, and the poor little cabin-boy, not wholly recovered from the severe sufferings of his shipwreck, in which all of the crew of the Retribution had found a watery grave, except those picked up by the frigate, crouched closely to Delfosse, and could not be persuaded to leave him for a moment.

In a few minutes the mizen-mast of the Yankee was shot away, and in the short space of one hour and a half from the beginning of the action, victory had deemed to perch upon the banner of the free, and fresh laurels were added to crown the brow of one of England's bravest sons.

The name of the strange vessel, now the prize of the frigate, was yet unknown.

A boat was dispatched to bring her commander on board the conqueror.

On her return Decatur, attired in complete uniform,

stood as near the ladder as a position on the poop would allow, and prepared to receive his unfortunate prisoner.

The gallant hero started with surprise when Carden, of the Macedonian, an old acquaintance, stepped up to the deck and offered him his sword. Decatur, with true native grace, returned it, saying as he did so: "Keep it yourself, captain; you are worthy to wear it."

Carden acknowledged the honourable conduct of his old friend, but held down his head and actually wept over his defeat.

The remembrance of a certain interview on board his own vessel haunted him like an evil genius; he had told Decatur, in the event of hostilities occurring between the two countries, the navy of England "would be swept from the face of the ocean by the superiority of the Yankee ships and sailors."

It was the determination of Decatur to send his prize to the port of London.

Being aware of the commander's intentions, Beall was anxious to take passage in her that he might once more set his foot upon the soil of his native land, never again to wander from it.

Delfosse yielded without much entreaty to accompany him; and, at their request, the two friends, with their companions, were soon rowed to the side of the Macedonian.

Don Manuel, who was leaning carelessly over the rail of that ship, watching the various movements that were taking place between the victor and the vanquished, saw the little boat approach, and instantly recognized his two rivals.

At that moment the thought of losing Isabel took entire control of all his faculties.

Starting, with unnatural and distorted features, he muttered:

"Oh, heaven! I cannot leave her!" and sprang towards the cabin.

At the same time he himself was recognized by Delfosse, who, pointing to him, exclaimed to Beall:

"See Don Manuel, the smuggler!"

The cabin-boy shrieked.

Beall jumped to his feet in an instant, and leaped the rail. Exile, suffering, battle, death—all were forgotten. Isabel must be near. His bounding heart beat fast as he followed close the footsteps of the retreating Spaniard. Officers and men regarded the scene with astonishment.

They both disappeared down the companion-way. In a moment the noise as of a hand-to-hand encounter, the slight scream, as of a female, were heard; and while yet the witnesses of this strange

affair stood motionless on the deck, Don Manuel rushed from the cabin-door and leaped into the sea.

A dozen men, led by Miller, Delfosse, and the boy, ran to the cabin. Clapsed in each other's arms lay Beall and Isabel, weltering in their own blood.

"Bring water—stand back—give them air!" cried many voices at the same time.

Just then, upon hearing the boy scream at the top of his voice, and fall senseless to the floor, the bystanders all looked up, and Pedro showed himself within the circle.

"Silence all!" he exclaimed. "I have a key to at least a part of this affray. I, for one, know these parties—the innocent victims of Don Manuel's jealousy. And this," pointing to the boy, "is not a boy, as you suppose, but a young lady, the sister of the poor murdered Englishman. See," said he, stripping up the loose sleeve of what appeared to be the boy, "here is proof of what I say. This bracelet bears the initials of her true name—Grace Beall. I decoyed her away from her home in England when she was a child, and called her Juanita."

The girl, who had recovered from her swoon in time to hear the last remarks of the pirate, fell on the prostrate form of her dying relative.

The shock seemed to revive poor Beall, and he opened his eyes and for a moment looked around him.

Seeing Delfosse, who was kneeling right at his side, he took the hand of his sister Grace, and, placing it in that of his friend, sank back, with a smile, into eternity.

The spirit of Isabel had already entered the other sphere.

When the distressing scene was over, and Pedro was sought after, he was nowhere to be found; and the sailors reported that they had seen a huge shark, that the scent of blood had drawn to the vessel, devour, with greedy appetite, the sinking smuggler.

In a canvas coffin, constructed by the rough hands of the sailmaker, with all the gentle care of Delfosse and the disconsolate Miller, the remains of the two lovers were committed to the sea. No gun was fired as they sank slowly to the distant bottom. No prayer was said; but tears flowed from eyes that seldom wept, at the thought that two who had loved so well should have so cold a bridal-bed.

In after-years, when happy children gathered round their hearth, Delfosse recalled with Grace reminiscences which then seemed holy, and many tears from youthful eyes paid a sympathetic tribute to the memory of Beall and Isabel.

THE END.



[MADAME JULIA'S WRATH ON HER DISCOVERY OF THE MARRIAGE.]

GUY BYNGEWORTHE.

CHAPTER I.

It was one of those perfect June days which dawn upon us, armed with an enchanter's wand. The air was of itself a draught of nectar, intoxicating one with bliss.

The sky looked like a floating sea of liquid sapphires, flickered with amber, on which the pearl white clouds drifted languidly, like downy couches into which the rosy-winged zephyrs had to be swung to and fro on the tremulous, golden strands of the sunbeams.

The foliage of the trees and the velvety green-sward had a richness and freshness of hue, as if newly washed in fairy dew.

The blossoming vines and shrubs lifted up their jewelled stems exultingly; the crimson lips of the roses flung fragrant kisses hither and thither as their branches were stirred in very wantonness of glee.

Byngeworth Park had never looked lovelier or grander.

After all, the lofty stateliness of venerable old walls, however picturesque, will not always compete with the perfection of modern art.

Sir Robert Monkton's famous old place was some three quarters of a mile farther down the river; a country seat that could boast of its massive foundation stones, laid about two centuries back; whose noble old elms rose stately and proud, with the spreading growth of many and many a year, before ever a tree of Byngeworth's mansion-house had been planted.

The Monktons, generation after generation of them, had lived and died there, and the present members of the old family sneered coldly, and resolutely set their backs against the "parvenu upstarts" who, settling down upon the waste lands by the river, had made the wilderness blossom like a rose, and as suddenly as if they had obtained secret lease of the services of Aladdin's genii, had reared a palace and its appropriate surroundings in the desert waste.

The Monktons might look askance with proud, indignant eyes, but it is a question if five out of every twenty of the passengers sweeping daily down the broad surface of the river in the steamboat gave a look at the old abbey, while their admiring glances and envious thoughts turned questioningly to the graceful buildings and elegant new mansion, with carefully kept, thoroughly finished surroundings. For what Byngeworth Park lacked in antiquity it made up for in elegance and lavishness of wealth.

The Byngeworth's purse, which apparently had no

bottom, had in its way been quite as powerful as the slave of Aladdin's lamp.

The best artists, the most talented architects, the most skilful builders, had come forward with alacrity in obedience to its omnipotent will, and there was the result.

The graceful, massive, charmingly outlined house, whose proportions and design might shame those of many a stately castle in the shire, standing on its broad terrace, with its sweep of velvety lawn, its broad avenue—the latter already lined with trim hedges which could give way when the elms had grown into suitable height—with its richly stocked flower garden in the rear, its row upon row of crystal-roofed hot-houses, its great stables, well stocked with sleek-coated animals, whose swift limbs bore quickly out of the dust cast by the lumbering old coach of the Monktons the costly barouche, or the richly appointed pony-carriage of Madame Byngeworth.

Yes, truly, it is a genii, this omnipotent, wonder-working angel or demon, whichever it may be, this potent ore—gold!

Madame Byngeworth did not undervalue its power. She saw the cold sneer, the arrogant hauteur, the angry indignation of the Monktons as she swept by them, and smiled calmly, folded her delicately gloved hands, and murmured:

"All in good time, my friends. All in good time. I can afford to wait a little, for my preparations are by no means complete."

She—Madame Julia Byngeworth—was the prime mover of all matters at the park. Nothing went on but her flashing black eye took note of it. That long, slim forefinger of hers was on the spring which set going all the machinery, mental or tangible, from whose evolutions had resulted this magnificent residence and valuable estate. Unto those two shapely hands of hers, and unto them alone, opened the purse which seemed to have no end.

For there was no Byngeworth master.

The glories of Byngeworth Park had never dawned upon old Silas Jenkins's brain, much less upon his eyes.

But it had been those hard, horny, grasping fingers of his which had sown the seed from which had been reaped such golden harvest.

When he married Julia Brown, the mill-girl of Madden's Lane, and moved into the two upper rooms of a crazy, dilapidated old house, how he would have laughed to scorn any thought of his wife's ever ruling as mistress over such a scene as I have been describing to you.

I am not sure but that a foreshadowing of such truth would have turned his brain.

It was one of those freaks of fortune which are constantly recurring.

A dull, listless nature, shrewd only in keeping what fell into his hands, yet perpetually stumbling upon golden opportunities, which showered over him their treasure almost without his seeming to beg for it.

Julia was quick-witted enough to suspect that year after year of steady industry with the most penurious expenditure must have provided something, and when a child was born to them she began to plead for a more liberal allowance.

Silas, in spite of his simplicity, had the obstinacy of a mule.

Besides, the greedy, gloating spirit of a miser had got possession of him.

He resolutely denied her insinuations and refused compliance with her wishes.

She might ultimately have encompassed them and outwitted him, for she was a woman of shrewd judgment and sharp wits.

But the child died, and no other came to take its place.

So Julia forgot her kindled ambition, and was glad to drive off the yearning memories of the tender little fingers at her breast, by hard work and ceaseless application.

From the apathy of this grief and listless indifference she was aroused by the stroke least expected of all.

Silas Jenkins was brought home dead!

The widow made a decent show of grief, but to her own soul she acknowledged that the dearest claim he had ever held was as the father of her lost darling. He had married her to obtain a smart woman to help him in his home and his business. She had listened to his suit because she was homeless and friendless.

Each had tacitly understood the agreement, and neither had asked or expected anything beyond. She felt no haunting remorse, because she was sure that she had fulfilled all his requirements. And she turned away from his newly made grave sedate and calm. A sudden lightning stroke broke up this frigid dreariness, this icy apathy, and gave life as by a galvanic shock.

She found herself possessed of an immense fortune, in the unlimited control of nearly two hundred thousand pounds, she who for twenty years had lived in the straitened circumstances of penury.

I have said she was a quick-witted, deep-minded woman. She was not elated by this sudden sweep of fortune. She sat down calmly and laid out her plans.

She had always hidden beneath that listless indifference a quick vein of romance and a vivid imagination. Indeed, because of this delightful world into which no soul but her own had ever peered, she had been able to bear her cold, barren life quietly.

The heart that had been crouching, hiding, brooding, like the winter-numbed insect, suddenly shot forth, found its wings and soared exultingly. Her first step under this change of fortune was to change her name, so Mrs. Silas Jenkins became Madame Julia Byngeworth.

There was a good reason for choosing the new name, aside from its aristocratic flavour. She had looked around among her husband's relations, and among them discovered an orphan boy, his sister a child, Guy Byngeworth, a bright, handsome lad, with a gentle, aristocratic bearing which had won her heart at once.

She took him away from the poor people who were keeping him out of charity, and so thankful to give him up, and carried him off in triumph.

He was to be her son.

It was but right some of poor old Silas's relations should share the fortune.

She gave the boy the first place in her heart and in her will, notwithstanding her researches had brought to light another orphan nearer her own blood—a little girl, her own cousin's daughter.

With the two children Madame Byngeworth entered upon a sphere far removed from the vicinity of Silas Jenkins's factory.

She took genteel lodgings, but made no display of her wealth. She was not an impatient woman; she had proved that long ago. She could bide her time.

The children had teachers in plenty, and every advantage wealth could bestow was heaped upon them.

It was not until she felt convinced that she had taught herself to appear like a gentlewoman, until constant association with scenes of luxury and people of refinement, added to her unceasing schooling of herself, had obliterated all traces of the hard-worked wife, that she set about the realization of the scheme which had all the while been lying plain and distinct in that cool brain of hers.

Then arose Byngeworth Park; and the sensitive pride of the Monktons was shocked and distressed by rumours of the sumptuous furnishings and unparalleled elegance of the neighbouring estate, which had, as it were, sprung out of nothing.

"Who are these Byngeworths? Whence do they come?" inquired Sir Robert, sarcastically.

Madame Julia smiled tranquilly, and casually mentioned the names of the noted London bankers who held her money. Those gentlemen were speedily besieged by eager inquirers.

"Wealthy? Oh, yes, no doubt of it, immensely rich. Family? Positively we can't say; never heard the name before, but it is unquestionably respectable."

Such was the answer Sir Robert took back to his family, much to their disgust and perplexity.

"What shall I do, my dear? shall I call?" asked Lady Monkton, lugubriously.

"Wait a little; let us maintain our dignity a little longer; we'll see."

Which Madame Julia calmly and contentedly reiterated in the most confident tone, "We'll see."

And just a month from this declaration Madame Julia, without the slightest sign of inward triumph on her calm, tranquil face, sat in her magnificent drawing-room, receiving with the stately grace of an empress the call of the whole family. Sir Robert, my lady, and Miss Florence Monkton.

From that day another line was marked on Madame Julia's programme—another step proposed to her ambitious spirit.

Guy Byngeworth had grown into a fine, manly youth. No scion of aristocratic house, with the noblest blood in his veins, could surpass him in beauty, or grace, or high-bred gallantry.

With Florence Monkton as his wife he could step securely into that charmed circle to which his adopted mother's aspirations had grown.

The two families would unite the two magic talismans which unlock the most jealously guarded gateways of society—wealth and a noble lineage.

It was enough.

Guy should marry Florence, who, to be sure, was rather a plain, dull-faced girl for the brilliant young man, but she was the only child of Sir Robert Monkton, and her son would inherit the title; and possessing the Byngeworth fortune, would make a brilliant figure.

Sir Robert had so far overcome his first scruples as to listen graciously to a very delicate hint of such a *désengagement*, and the nobly born Florence flushed rosy with delight at its repetition, for, as I have said before, Guy Byngeworth was no ordinary young gentleman.

But all this while I have left Byngeworth Park lying fair and lovely in the golden sunshine of that

wonderful June day, lovely and bright and glad some everywhere without, but within there is a terrible tempest brooding, a awful cloud blackening and lowering with lurid threatening.

Guy Byngeworth is standing at a rose-twined pillar in the little verandah, on the western wing, tranquilly smoking his cigar, when a slender figure in a white cambric morning dress steals out from the doorway, and a fair young face, a little pale as if from recent illness, looked timidly into his eyes:

"Guy, oh, Guy!"

He turned instantly to the sound of the sweet appealing voice with that sort of a smile on his face which a man only has for the woman who holds his heart.

"Is it you, Maude? Can you get away from surveillance long enough to give me one of our old walks?"

The graceful head dropped like a rose heavy with its own fragrance and beauty, and a faint colour swept over the pale cheek.

"Oh, no, I could not go; and, besides, you forget I am not strong enough to walk now."

She lifted her blue eyes to his, and a quick significant look passed between them, at which both coloured and looked slightly confused.

"Poor darling; it is very hard for you!" said Guy, patting the delicate little hand clinging to his coat-sleeve. "I feel so mean and guilty towards you. But for a little while I suppose we must try and bear it. It seems the only course to pursue."

"I suppose so. But oh, Guy, I have been so frightened this morning."

"What at, my little trembler?"

"Aunt Julia received a letter this morning in a strange handwriting. I don't know how I happened to see it, but I haven't had a moment's peace since, for it was post-marked Plymouth, Guy."

The young man gave a nervous start.

"You don't think—Pshaw! it couldn't be," said he, throwing away his cigar and lifting his red lip almost savagely.

"I can't help dreading it. Oh, Guy, what shall we do if she find it out?" almost sobbed the girl.

"Hush, hush, darling. It can't be. Didn't I take every precaution? It is silly to think of such a thing."

"But someone may have found it out. There's Anthony Brown. Oh, Guy, he does look at me so strangely. And the other day he said something about my visit to Plymouth, and there was such an evil sparkle in his eye I thought I should sink to the earth before him."

"Curse the knave! I have fairly loathed him ever since his insolent proffer of marriage to you. What presumption; I wonder that mother tolerates him."

"I am sure he suspects something of the truth, and that he will work till he finds it out. Oh, Guy, I never thought to feel so miserable. It seems that my heart is like to be torn in twain, half of it is yearning so—for—for—Plymouth, and half so frightened lest everything be discovered."

"My poor little Maude! my little drooping dove. Bear up a little longer. Let her only forget this new whim, and everything shall be cleared up; I am sure it will presently be all right."

"I wish I could think so; oh, I wish I could feel hopeful! But a weight like lead seems to have settled upon me. A dismal foreboding seized me the moment I saw that postmark, and it has been getting more dismal every minute. Oh, Guy, her anger is very terrible. I never saw it but once, and I shall never forget that time."

He stroked softly the tremulous fingers.

"My nervous little Maude! You that were so high-spirited and defiant once. This sickness has changed you sorely. You must not fret over these thoughts. You must try and put them away. Remember how dearly she loves us. Remember that she has been a mother to us both, and that I am her adopted heir," he said, soothingly.

She shivered.

"Ah, I wish I could forget that. For it almost drives me frantic to think I may be the means of robbing you of your inheritance. Oh, what a beautiful day it is for me to feel so wretched!"

"Put away the clouds as the sky has done. It is soon enough to bewail when the trouble comes."

"Hark!" cried Maude Young, springing away from him. "That is her bell. Hear how fiercely it is rung."

The young man listened to the sharp clang which rung out from the hall behind them with a troubled look, which he vainly sought to hide as her tearful blue eyes turned to him wildly.

He had no time for reassuring words, for the door was unclosed, and a middle-aged man, with a short mis-shapen figure and singularly fermed head, very long and high and narrow, looked out upon them.

"Mrs. Byngeworth wants you, both of you," said he, in a cold, expressionless voice, and instantly withdrew.

"It is coming. Oh, Guy, I knew the trouble was coming," cried the girl, clinging to the pillar to support her faltering steps.

"Now you are foolish, Maude. Is it anything strange for her to want us both? Don't look so desperately frightened when you go into her room."

He half led her into the house, across the grand hall and over the spacious staircase, and paused to whisper an assuring word at the door of Madame Julia's sitting-room.

But he turned pale himself when he crossed the threshold, and beheld the upright figure sitting in the great velvet easy-chair, with its passionate fierceness of look and gesture.

She was still a fine-looking woman was Madame Byngeworth. Wealth had tenderly smoothed out many of the traces of early hardship, and concealed others by the multifarious arts of toilet. A black satin dress with delicate ruffles of fine old lace at wrist and throat set off with a stately grace the tall, somewhat angular figure. The hands crossed in her lap over a crumpled letter had seen years enough of ease and luxury to grow white and delicate. The dark hair was glossy, and showed only here and there a line of silver; the eyes were keen, bright and watchful.

But they glared now with the lustre of suppressed anger as the youthful pair stood struck with dismay upon the threshold.

She looked at them a few moments without speaking, and naked swords have pierced less painfully than those flaming eyes. Then she burst into a short, bitter laugh, and said, sneeringly:

"It is enough. I need not ask a single question. I see plainly every word of this shameful story is true. I can read it on your traitorous faces. Oh, serpents, serpents, I took you out of misery and degradation, both of you. And now you turn and sting me."

Her cheeks grew livid, her lips were fairly blue, and the veins stood out on her temples like cords, while those black eyes gleamed with a brilliancy frightful as the lurid glare of a raging fire.

It is often so with these strong, sternly controlled natures. Once overmastering the will, their intensity of emotion is something startling and terrifying.

"Mother," began Guy, stepping before his companion, who stood like one congealing into stone.

Madame Julia flung up her hands with a passionate gesture.

"Don't call me mother. You, who have cheated and deceived and disgraced me."

The words were flung forth beneath the gnashing teeth, and the tone was hoarse and vindictive.

Guy shuddered.

"Let us wait till you are calmer, mother. Then if there be anything we can explain—"

She tossed the letter towards him.

"Explain that; tell me it is a lie, if you dare."

Guy read it through and laid it down with a heavy sigh. But at the same time there came a look across his face which showed that he had come to a decision and put away for ever his irresolution and tremor.

He turned aside quietly and flung his arm around the pale, trembling Maude, answering, gravely:

"Yes, mother, it is true. Sorely enough have we repented of the concealment. We meant to tell you as soon as we thought you would hear it patiently. We were wrong, very wrong to act clandestinely, but we ask you to forgive us for the sake of our great love for each other, and for you. Say, oh, say that you forgive."

She was fairly foaming with rage. Her cheek was ghastly, her eyes like coals of fire.

"Forgive you," shrieked she, "forgive you, who have ruined the dearest hope of my life, never, never! I shall drive you forth with curses to be the beggars you were before my bounty lifted you from your degradation."

"Oh, aunt, Aunt Julia, have mercy," shrieked Maude, springing forward and falling at the feet of Madame Byngeworth. "Do not curse Guy; let your anger fall on me, on me only. Take Guy back to your love."

"Away, minion. Let me never look upon your face again! Would that you had died ere I had the ill luck to chance upon you. You with your doll's face and your deceitful arts coming between me and my plans. Take yourself away; I will not look at you again!"

The wretched Maude, with a dry, gasping sob, slowly lifted herself from the floor.

Guy, with a flashing glance of indignation, flung his arm around her to steady her tottering limbs.

"Mother," said he, almost sternly, "you must deal with us alike."

"I mean to do so. I shall turn you both from my door."

"Not Guy, not Guy, Aunt Julia. I will go, but take Guy back," moaned Maude.

Madame Byngeworth turned suddenly, a dull red spot gathering in the centre of her livid cheek.

"Guy," demanded she, with sudden vehemence, "will you consent? This may be hushed up. We can send off this miserable girl to her wretched secret in Plymouth. Will you put away all thoughts of her and marry Florence?"

"Are you a woman with a heart or conscience and ask it of me?" answered Guy, fiercely. "Never, never. Oh, mother, come back to your own true, generous self. Forgive us, and let our life-long devotion prove to you our grief at this disappointment of yours. It is in a measure your own doing. You brought us together. How could we help loving each other? Mother, mother, do not turn away from me; say that you forgive me."

The handsome young man knelt down before her and sought to reach her hand.

Madame Julia sprang to her feet and pushed him away contemptuously.

Her passion had reached its climax.

Her hands were clenched, her teeth shut grimly against the bloodless lips, her face was deathly pale, and the great beads of cold perspiration stood on her forehead.

A torrent of fierce, utterly reckless invective poured from her lips, in a strained, hoarse voice.

"Go, go," said she, passionately; "let me never look upon your graceless face again. Go back to the scenes from which I took you, I who rescued you from the cold charity, the miserable pittance of a beggar, and took you to my home and heart. I who heaped upon you every favour and luxury and privilege that even a prince could ask. I who denied no wish of your heart, who planned and hoped and wrought only for your advancement. I who brought you to this home of luxury it acknowledged heir. Speak, acknowledge that I have done all this for you."

"It is true; you have. Oh, you have been a mother to me. Do not forget the tender character now," sobbed Guy, profoundly affected, the tears pouring over his pale cheeks, while Maude threw herself upon the floor and buried her ghastly face in her hands.

"And what have I asked of you in return?" demanded the cold, stern voice.

"You have had a son's unwavering respect and love. Always, always that, dear mother," replied Guy, more calmly.

Her haughty lip curled.

"It looks like respect and love. Thwarting me in the one aim and object of my life. Practising the most shameful deceit, following blindly your own headstrong will. I tell you, unless you leave this artful girl, and marry Florence, Guy Byngeworth, you go forth the beggar you were when I took you away from that miserable house. I will be lenient so far. I will give you the choice. I will forget and pardon all this folly if you yield me implicit obedience in the future. So much, no more; I need not picture to you what lies before you if you refuse. You can see for yourself how unfitted you are to earn even your own bread, much more to provide for a wife and child. You shall have your choice."

There was a little tremor of appeal in her voice betraying her passionate yearning over him through the fierce anger, which was harder for Guy to resist than anything she had said. But he folded his arms and answered, sadly:

"There is no choice, there can be no choice. My honour, my duty to Maude has even more powerful claim upon me than the great obligations I owe to you, my generous benefactress. Let me forego your fortune, I deserve it for this deceit, although I meant it innocently enough. But oh, give me your love still, my more than mother!"

He wrung his hands and looked up into her face with piteous entreaty. It had hardened like that of a statue.

"I will give you until to-morrow morning to decide. If you still defy my wishes you march forth from here without a shilling in your pocket."

"Aunt, aunt," cried Maude, in a sharp tone of anguish, "you cannot be so pitiless. Spare Guy and visit your anger upon me."

Madame Julia tore herself from the imploring hands, never heeding that the movement left the tottering form to fall heavily to the floor.

"Miserable girl!" hissed she, in a tone of such deadly enmity it chilled the blood in her listener's veins. "If you were lying thus at my feet, dying for a single drop of water to moisten your deceitful lips, I would not stoop to give it to you."

"Just heaven! forgive her, she knows not what she says!" ejaculated Guy, in a tone of horror, as he stopped to raise the prostrate figure she had spurned.

But the girl gathered herself up, and turned upon her aunt a face with a look of sorrow.

A fierce lustre gathered in the soft blue eyes, a fiery red spot burnt hotly on the ghastly cheek.

"Aunt Julia," said she, in a low, strange voice, "there are some things too hard to bear. Even a worm will turn at last when it is trodden upon."

"For that reason I shall thrust you forth," sneered Madame Julia. "To-morrow morning there shall be a routing. Guy, I will give you the opportunity to return to my affection; but I warn you for this thankless girl there is not the slightest use of intercession. She is the cause of all the trouble. She shall march away from here, and beg or starve as it may be."

Maude put out her two slender white hands in horror, but her eyes flashed still more fiercely, and her head rose haughtily.

"It shall be neither, Madame Julia Byngeworth," said she, and walked proudly from the room.

"Mother, mother, how can you be so hard?" implored Guy.

Madame Julia waved her hand authoritatively. She was growing tremulous and convulsed.

"Go; not another word. To-morrow morning there shall be a final settlement! Till then you may have time to reflect upon the subject."

"But reflection cannot alter the circumstances, they are inexorable," pleaded the young man as he turned away.

"And so am I," answered she, imperiously; "to-morrow morning will show whether I have a son, or you a mother."

Ah, that to-morrow! could she hear the ringing of its knell?

CHAPTER II.

MISERABLE enough, yet comforting his despair with vague assertions of his ability to throw off the yoke of his luxurious habits and fastidious tastes, and make a man's place for himself in the busy world, Guy Byngeworth went in search of Maude.

He looked the house over and went out to a favourite arbour in the rear of the gardens.

He lifted the screen of glossy leaves, whose lustrous green was starred as by flakes of fire with gorgeous scarlet blossoming, and found, as he expected, the slender, graceful figure.

But the face which was slowly turned towards him startled him, so unlike was it to the woebegone, tearful countenance he had prepared for.

The scarlet spots still burnt upon the cheeks, lending a painful contrast to the deadly whiteness of the rest of her face.

The large violet eyes were dry and almost painfully bright.

The scarlet lips were curved haughtily and proudly. All her meekness and terror and weakness seemed to have vanished when all her tears were shed.

She sat before him, not a frightened, helpless child to be petted and encouraged, but a strong, firm, self-reliant woman.

"Is it you, Guy? Have you anything new to tell me?"

"No, darling; I fear she will be as she says, inexorable," answered he, with an involuntary look of deference at the grave, calm face.

"I have no doubt of it. I told you that I had seen her angry once before and that it was frightful. We must prepare for the worst; we must prepare for the worst."

She repeated the last words in a fixed, gloomy voice, with her blazing eyes fastened in a dreamy abstraction far up into the smiling blue of that June sky.

"And that worst may not be so very bad, my Maude," said Guy, bravely; "we will go away, if it must be, and I will fight my way fearlessly. Surely a healthy young fellow like myself ought to be able to earn bread for wife and child. M I had only been brought up to any one pursuit," he added in a moment, in a fiercer tone, "if I had not been so thoroughly enervated! What right had she to take me from a position that would have forced me to learn how to work, to have persistently unfitted me for any useful sphere, and then thus abruptly to cast me off?"

"Aye," repeated Maude, in a sharp, vindictive tone that made Guy shudder, "what right has she to do it?"

"Well, well, let us quit the hateful subject. We will weather the cruel storm together somehow—you and I, and the frail little creature at Plymouth."

Maude clasped her cold hands across her heaving breast, murmuring, drearily:

"Oh, oh, if it were not for her—my lily, my rosebud—if it were not for her, I think I could bear it better. To think of all she must forego."

"It is light trouble for that unconscious creature," said Guy, with a little jealous resentment at her indifference to his loss. "It is I who must suffer most keenly."

She turned her eye slowly to him, and said, in a husky voice:

"Don't think I value lightly what you relinquish if you cleave to me and the poor little wail at Plymouth. I have thought it all over and over until it seems to me it will never come right in this dreary world, that you could never live and bear up under the miseries of that poverty which must come to us."

Ne, no, you could not, dear Guy; you who have been taught to feel so certain of endless riches, so inured to every luxury, so used to the adulation and caresses of fortune. I know it will kill you to come down to the hard tasks and dreary privations of poverty. Oh that wicked, cruel, iron woman, to compel me to this horrible alternative. I know there is but one way to help it—there is but one way."

Her voice sank down to a low, awed whisper.

There was a wild, horrified look on her set features which might well alarm him.

Guy threw his arm around her, and tried to draw her beautiful head to his breast.

But she seemed rigid in every joint and muscle, and would not bend at all.

Sitting upright, she repeated:

"There is but one way."

"Maude, Maude, do not talk any more about it. She may repent yet. She certainly has always seemed to love me with all a mother's devotion. She is very angry now, and we must wait for her to grow calm. It is not so very unnatural, it is a sore disappointment for her pride, and I see now how wrong the deception was," said he, soothingly, thinking only of calming her intense excitement and banishing the unnatural mood.

"The deception was not my fault, and she blames me for everything—I, who must suffer most keenly."

"You have been innocent through the whole, my Maude. The blame belongs to me. It was recklessly imprudent, cruelly unkind in me to urge upon you the secret marriage. I see now all the folly of it," he said, bitterly.

"You repent it so keenly! oh, Guy, Guy," said she, with a low, wild cry of anguish; "if I had only been firm and resisted your entreaties and turned a deaf ear to your persuasions. I felt sure that it was wrong, but I yielded to your judgment."

"And I only thought of the danger of losing you. When she proposed marrying you to Anthony Brown I went mad with a fiery determination to secure you against all other claimants. Cheer up, my little Maude; if there were no other way of winning you I cannot find it in my heart to bewail even this awful strait."

She laid her burning cheek against his, but gave no other caress as she whispered:

"Poor Guy! poor Guy! Your love for me must not be your ruin. It shall not! it shall not!"

"Hush, Maude; how fierce my dove has grown! Let us try to put away all angry thoughts. She may repent, she may forgive us. I know she loves me."

"I think she does, Guy. She always loved you best. She has never been tender with me. I used to marvel at the glare in her eyes sometimes when some unconscious look of mine seemed to strike her with bitter significance. I learned the secret three years ago when mother's sister came to the school to see me. She loved my father years ago when she was a girl, and he was attentive to her until he saw my mother. That is why she hates me so. She has tried to hide it until to-day, but now she vents the venom freely. She meant every word she said. She would see me perish before her eyes without lifting a helping finger. Oh, she is hard, pitiless, remorseless. There is no more hope of her relenting than of the sun pausing there in mid-heaven to give us perpetual day. There is only one way, Guy, only one way."

"We will look for that in the morning, my darling. You will be ill with all this excitement and trouble. Go in, and I will send Mrs. Austin to you with some toast and tea. Take them both. Remember it is your duty to others to care for your health. We will talk over our plans to-morrow when the settlement comes."

"To-morrow!" Her white shuddering lips gasped as they repeated the words. Then suddenly flinging herself upon his breast and clinging there frantically, Maude added, speaking the words swiftly and impulsively:

"Guy, Guy, whatever the morrow brings will you try to think lovingly and leniently of me? Will you promise to remember that all my thought is for what is best for you, all my heart is in one great love for you? Guy, promise me that."

He took her in his arms and kissed her passionately on the broad white forehead, the hot, scarlet cheek, the feverish lips that had so sadly lost their girlish, smiling grace.

"My wife, my little Maude," he said, almost solemnly, "heaven will bless me for your innocent sake."

Her arms fell away from him, she staggered to her feet and slowly and mechanically led the way to the house.

(To be continued.)

Mrs. Anna Bishop is at present giving concerts at Manila. She was wrecked on the passage from San Francisco, and travelled over 1,400 miles in an open boat. She lost all her wardrobe and music.

COMMON SENSE.—Many, if not most, of the evils which the impatient and irritated sufferer charges to his ill fortune, to accident, to the misconduct of others, to the injustice or neglect of the world, will be found, when honestly traced to their true source, to have arisen from a defect in the person himself—to his own want of common sense. Yet this is the last deficiency anyone suspects in himself. Men will acknowledge that they are not learned—that they are not witty—they have not genius. To be told that they have not common sense would offend or astonish the dullest or most humble. Common sense is assuredly the most rare, as it is the most useful faculty which man can possess. What is this common sense which is so freely and unceremoniously claimed by everyone as a natural inheritance? It is the judgment of a sound, clear understanding, neither deceived by false appearance, nor exaggerated by imagination, nor distorted by passion or prejudice. It views things as they are, stripped of accidental circumstances, and is misled by no delusion.

SCIENCE.

CHOLERA.—Dr. Frankland has been investigating some of the physical properties of cholera matter, cholérine. He shows that it passes through filtering paper; and water containing one five hundredth part of the matter is not entirely purified by transmission through animal charcoal.

If lime or sulphate of magnesia be introduced into the oxyhydrogen jet these incombustible materials cannot be heated by the burning gases to a higher point than 14,000 deg. Fahr., but the spectra obtained from these incandescent bodies are found to coincide in the photographic lengths with that of the solar spectrum; hence it is asserted that the temperature of the sun may be approximately estimated to be not higher than that of the oxyhydrogen flame.

POST-MORTEM PHOTOGRAPHY.—Photography has recently been applied to a purpose of an unusual kind—the obtaining the likeness of a person who had been dead for some months; and, as it appears, with such excellent results that it could not be distinguished from that of a living person. We (*Scientific Review*) some time since drew the attention of our readers to the processes by which M. Gorini preserves organic matters from putrefaction, imparting to them the consistency of stone, without altering their appearance, and restoring flexibility to them at pleasure. Pietro Martini, the author of a history of Sardinia, who died on the 17th of last February, and whose body had been preserved by M. Gorini's process, was taken out of his coffin on the 17th of the following June, and, after having been rendered flexible that he might be properly posed, and appropriately clothed, his likeness was taken with the most perfect success, so that it would never be imagined that it was obtained four months after his death.

THE BEAUTY OF ICE.—Witness the phenomena of crystallization, to appreciate which we need go no farther than the freezing of water and the formation of snow. Professor Tyndall deftly and delicately dissects a piece of ice by means of a beam from his electric lamp, pulling the crystal edifice to pieces by accurately reversing the order of its architecture. Silently and symmetrically the crystallizing force had built the atoms up; silently and symmetrically does the electric beam take them down. Here we have a star, and there a star, and as the action continues, the ice appears to resolve itself into stars, each one possessing six rays, each one resembling a beautiful six-petalled flower. By shifting the lens to and fro new star flowers are brought into view, and as the action continues, the edges of the petals become serrated, spreading themselves out like fern-leaves. Probably few are aware of the beauty latent in a block of common ice. Only think, continues our eloquent countryman, of lavish nature operating thus throughout the world! Every atom of the solid ice which sheets the frozen lakes of the north has been affixed according to this law. Nature "lays her beams in music," and it is the function of science to purify our organs so as to enable us to hear the strain. To many persons a block of ice may seem of no more interest and beauty than a block of glass; but, in reality it bears the same relation to glass that an oratorio of Handel does to the crisis in a market place. The ice is music; the glass is noise. The ice is order; the glass is confusion. In the glass molecular forces constitute an inextricably entangled skein; in the ice they are woven into a symmetric web of the wonderful texture just described.

LIVING (?) ORGANISMS IN CHALK.—Strange as it may appear, M. A. Béchamp, one of the most celebrated of French chemists, alleges that chalk contains an abundance of minute living cellular organisms, and in proof of this assertion he points to the known fermenting power of chalk, and offers also microscopic

evidence of the presence of these minute bodies. Chalk is known to contain fossil foraminifera in such large quantities that 100 grammes would furnish as many as 2,000,000 specimens. But, says M. Béchamp, in addition to these, chalk undoubtedly contains other organisms more minute than any of the infusoria, and, these, though perhaps millions of years old, are still living. Take, he says, from the centre of a piece of chalk a portion of the substance, crush it, and mix it with pure distilled water, and examine it with a high microscopic power, and you will see numerous minute brilliant points exhibiting a peculiar trembling movement. That this movement is not what is termed *Brownian*, M. Béchamp considers to be proved by the facts:—(1) That these particles when isolated act as powerful ferments; and (2) that when analyzed they are found to consist solely of carbon, hydrogen and nitrogen. We must confess that M. Béchamp's views startle us, and we should like to see them corroborated. All microscopists are familiar with peculiar trembling movements of the particles of matter contained in the cavities of crystals. Further, we should like to know how M. Béchamp contrived to separate these wonderful organisms, which he terms *microzyma creta*, from the organic remains of the surrounding foraminifera. A living organism as old as the chalk formation is certainly an eighth wonder of the world.

STRANGE FAMILY LAWSUIT.

A PECULIAR case came before one of the Paris courts a few days ago. A M. Baisson had two daughters by a first wife, and when she died the wife's mother, a wealthy widow, took charge of the children and brought them up; and also expressed her intention to leave them her fortune. In the meantime M. Baisson married again and had a young family.

Recently the eldest girl fell in love with an army surgeon, and her choice was approved by her grandmother. But his only fortune was his commission, and on this sole ground M. Baisson, when informed of the engagement by his mother-in-law, peremptorily declared that the army surgeon was no fit match for his daughter. The father, who had been content to delegate to her grandmother the entire care of his daughter from her earliest infancy, came forward resolutely to exercise the parental authority which the law gives him in order to prevent the marriage of a girl almost of age with the man of her choice, and who had courted her with the approbation of the relation who stood in *loco parentis*, and who had been throughout her life her best friend.

He brought an action, but in the meantime the girls and their grandmother disappeared, and for some time he could find no trace of them. He afterwards found that the two girls were concealed under false names in a Catholic convent in Glasgow. Thereupon he brought an action against his mother-in-law, requiring her to bring the girls back to France and hand them over to his custody. The tribunal of first instance made a decree in his favour, and ordered the young ladies' grandmother to pay 1,000*fr.* a day for two months unless the girls were restored to their father. She, thinking that the penalty of this decree would be the worst of the matter, let the two months expire, and actually paid the large sum of 60,000*fr.* into court—a sum that she was prepared to sacrifice rather than surrender the girls to their obdurate father. But then he brought a farther action, laying damages at a million of francs. M. Desmaret, the lady's counsel, told her that the law was altogether on the father's side, and that if she did not give the children up he might go on bringing actions until he utterly ruined her.

Acting upon M. Desmaret's advice, the grandmother has now brought the young ladies back from Glasgow. The father has gained his point, they are now in his custody. The penalty has been reduced by the court to 5,000*fr.*

OWING to a sudden influx of bidders, the horses of King George of Hanover yielded after all a total of 100,000 thalers at the auction. Some magnificent grays were not sold, but, at the special request of their former owner, left to be repurchased by him.

A WONDERFUL TURNSPIT.—The most singular spit in the world was that of Count de Castel Maria, one of the most opulent lords of Treviso. This spit turns one hundred and thirty different roasts at once, and plays twenty-four tunes, and whatever it plays corresponds to a certain degree of cooking, which is perfectly understood by the cook.

MINING STATISTICS.—A return of the number of deaths from explosions of fire-damp in our mines has been recently published by Government, and possesses at this time, remarks the *Athenæum*, in consequence of the recent fearful casualties of this nature, more than ordinary interest. The explosions from

fire-damp in Great Britain during the ten years 1856-65 were 2,019. Of these 412 occurred in South Wales, 340 in Yorkshire, 238 in North and East Lancashire, and 126 in South Staffordshire and Worcestershire. The deaths from falls of coal and earth from the roofs of the mines during the same period amounted to 3,953; the mortality from accidents in shafts to 1,710; and from other miscellaneous causes to 2,234, making the total number of deaths from violent causes during the ten years 9,916. Of these 20 per cent. were from fire-damp explosions, 40 per cent. from falls of the roof, 17 per cent. from shaft accidents, and 23 from miscellaneous causes. In the last two years, 1864-65, the returns show a reduction of 991 deaths in proportion to the increased quantity of coal raised in Great Britain.

A LOVER OUTWITTED.

A YOUNG English barrister has succeeded in marrying Mdlle. R—, the wealthiest heiress in Paris, and connected with one of the highest families.

The young lady was known to possess an undisguised weakness for a well-dressed man, and, by loudly expressing this opinion, had been of more service to the tailors of Paris, within the last year, than Count d'Orsay in double the space of time.

The barrister had many rivals, but the most formidable was a gentleman acknowledged to be the most approved dandy in Paris. The lady selected these two to decide from, and invited them both to her *château*. The Frenchman declared to his friends that he meant to cut the matter short at once by so outshining the Englishman by his dress that the latter would retire from the field crushed to atoms by the superior skill he was determined to manifest on this occasion. The Englishman said nothing, made no boast, but accepted the invitation, and together, by the same train, the two rivals left Paris for the seat of war.

It so happened that the French dandy had furnished himself with a regular *trousseau* for the occasion, at the celebrated English tailors, in the Rue de Helder, and the English tailor, out of sheer patriotism, had told Mr. H— of what it was composed. A sudden idea flashed across the brain of the barrister. His servant, one of the sanctified, hypocritical *roué valets*, for whom London was always famous, is something about the height and size of the French *prétendu*. Mr. H— immediately ordered for this ally the exact counterpart of every suit already ordered by the Marquis de la B—.

The first day at dinner the poor young marquis was rather disconcerted when, upon entering the dining-room, his glance alighted upon the very counterpart of himself standing, self-centred, behind the Englishman's chair; and he looked angrily at his rival to see if any insult were intended; but the Englishman was too intent upon making himself agreeable to the lady to notice his ruffled temper.

The second day the same scene was enacted, although our hero had completely changed even the style of his white *tourure*, and again was the same ill-humour displayed during the whole of dinner, while Mr. H— was profiting by the silence of his witty rival.

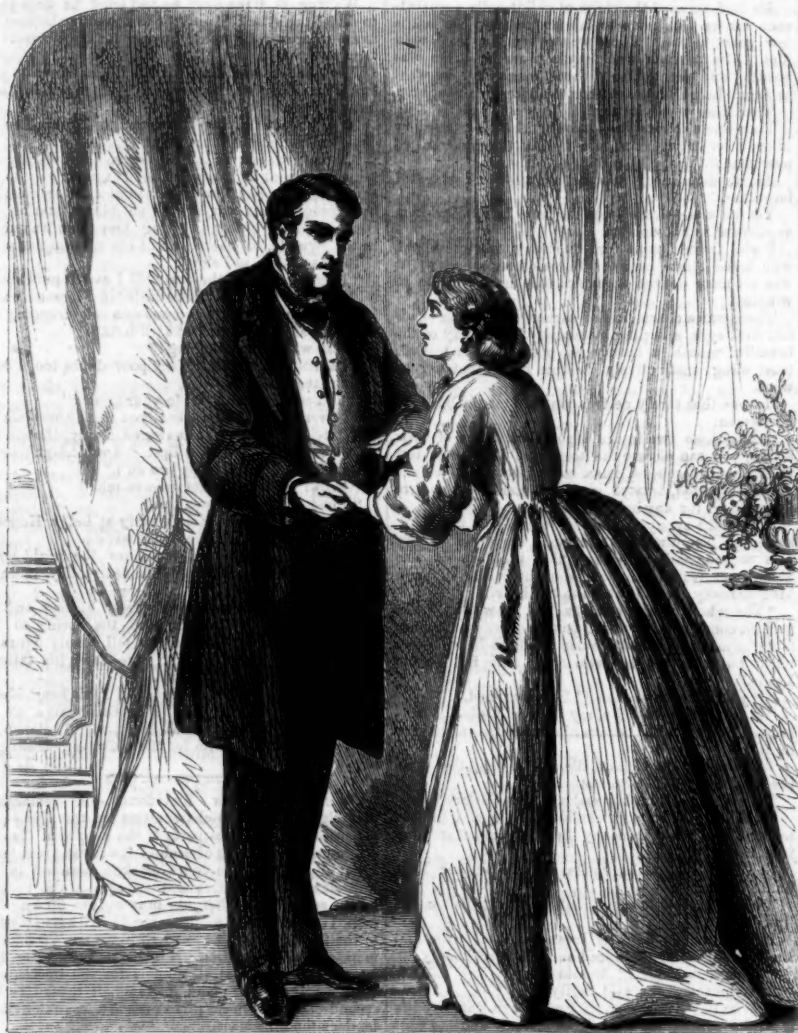
The third and fourth repetitions were too ridiculous. The young marquis, too clever and too much a man of the world not to feel the absurdity of his position, prudently withdrew.

LINCOLN CATHEDRAL has now received its latest adornment, the "Trollope Pulpit" of Caen stone; gray marble and red marble shafts of great beauty of form support a delicately carved oak pulpit. The minister is now lit with gas—and the effect is perfect.

THE Croydon Petty Sessions have recently decided that the man who urges on an overweighted horse to a leap he has not the strength to accomplish, and so suffers from the effort as to be useless the next moment, is not guilty of cruelty to animals within the meaning of the statute.

SMOKING AWAY THE FRANCHISE.—A tradesman occupying a house at £7 5*s.*, by denying himself the weed might have a £10 domicile, to bring him within the pale so much desiderated. Three-halfpence per day and an extra quid on Sunday is all that lies betwixt him and the land of Goshen.

A CIRCULAR memorandum has been issued from the Horse Guards, by order of the Commander-in-Chief, by which the provisions of Circular No. 106, dated the 15th of February, 1861, and Circular No. 186, of the 28th of Feb., 1862, for recalling from the half-pay all officers able to serve on full pay, and for those on the half-pay who were not fit for service to retire from the service, if they so wished, by the sale of their commissions, are, with the concurrence of the Secretary of State for War, suspended until further notice.



[ANNA CONFIDES IN LEON MARKHAM.]

ANNA LEIGH.

It was New Year's Day, and Mr. James Leigh had consented to his house being made a rendezvous for all his pretty daughter's friends on that evening. There had been no morning's receptions, but invitations were out for a large social meeting in the evening, and more than one pretty face had its blushes deepened by the thought of some special partner with whom to dance at Anna Leigh's New Year's party.

It had been a custom of Mr. Leigh's sister for many years to have this annual gathering, and pretty motherless Anna had been allowed to come down in her simple white dress and partake of the festivities, although not "out;" but this year the young girl was to take her place as the hostess, having been regularly introduced into society a few months previously.

The little flutter of expectation that girls, heart-whole and free, experience before a party had given place with Anna to the deep, calm happiness of loving where she had won the pure devotion of a noble, upright heart in return.

From a child Harold Leslie had been her favourite companion and friend, and when he came to her to plead for the sweetest title man wins from a woman she put no mask over face or heart, but let him read the love in her voice and eyes.

It was a match that suited all: Mr. Leslie was wealthy, well born, and gentlemanly; sweet Anna Leigh was the only child of a millionaire, a lady in position, education, and birth.

So the course of true love ran very smooth, and, as Anna pinned to her dress the sprig of myrtle Harold had placed in the bouquet sent that morning, she had no thought of any jar in the smooth current of her happy life.

Before another new year dawned she hoped to be a happy, beloved wife, dispensing the hospitalities of her husband's house.

The large parlours were filled at an early hour by the invited guests, and as Mrs. Morton and Anna greeted one after another of their friends the elder lady had scarcely time to note a missing link in the chain.

But the eye of love, watching for one face, will never forget to note its loss, though the whole world besides crowded round.

The hours passed heavily to the young hostess, for in the brilliant throng there was not one voice that could make the music her heart coveted.

Where was he?

In the morning he had called, his bright, manly self, full of life and vigour.

It seemed impossible to believe that any ill had befallen him in those few short hours, yet equally impossible to think anything but an imperative necessity could have kept him from her side.

"Father!"

It was late in the evening when the word fell, in pleading accents, upon James Leigh's ear.

He had withdrawn a little from his guests, and stood looking over the room with a gloomy brow and firmly set lips.

"Well, Anna?"

"What was it Mr. Hunter said just now about Norris Leslie. Harold is not here!"

The last sentence whispered low, as if the utterance choked her.

"I'll tell you to-morrow. Go dance now, child."

"Father, what is it? Tell me now. Come, we are not wanted. Come into the library."

"To-morrow, child, to-morrow."

"Now. Oh, father, come now."

The white face, imploring eyes, and the suppressed agony in the voice, were more than the loving father could resist.

Reluctantly he yielded to the hand that led him from the room, but before the library was gained his arm was wound round the young girl's waist to keep the trembling, shivering figure from falling.

"Is Harold dead?" she said, as he closed the door.

"Dead! no! Better if he were!"

"No, no, father; you cannot have such desperate news as that for me!"

"Anna, you must tear him from your heart, blot him from your life. Norris Leslie absconded to-day with the funds of the bank of which he is president—he is a swindler."

"But, father, Harold?"

"His son accompanied him."

She dropped at his feet as if the sentence had shot her dead.

"It is a pretty mess altogether," muttered the merchant as he lifted the little figure in his arms and carried it to a sofa, "and my little pet will be the worst sufferer. I'd like to have them here for one hour," and he ground his teeth together. "Now, if I call folks in, this will be all over the town to-morrow, and I won't have Anna's name bandied about in this connection. Fortunately the engagement is not much known. Anna! darling! Anna!"

But there was no answer to his loving call. As pale as death the girl lay unconscious of her father's voice and loving caress. Crushing the bright dress and flowers she had put on with such dainty care to please the eyes of him she loved, she lay cold and insensible like a crushed lily.

"Anna! Speak to me, pet," pleaded her father.

"I must call Kate. Confound the fellow."

And Mr. Leigh strode off to the parlour again to find his sister. Of course she had to be hunted up, as people wanted in a hurry always do, but he found her at last, and taking her place, sent her, with a whispered caution of quiet, to the library.

Utterly ignorant of any cause for the illness, the good lady was bewildered to find her niece lying in a fainting fit on the sofa, as unlike the gay, pretty little belle of an hour previous as it is possible to imagine. Her womanly skill and tenderness soon put the proper remedies to work, and when the father returned, a short time later, he found Anna conscious, but evidently unable to face her guests again that evening.

"I'll carry her upstairs, Kate," he said, "and you must make the best excuse you can."

"But what is the matter?" inquired the bewildered lady.

"To-morrow—I'll tell you to-morrow. Go back now, and make the best story you can. If she don't know herself she can't tell anybody else," he muttered, as his sister left the room. "Come, birdie, put your arms around my neck, and I'll carry you to your room."

She clung to him fondly. This was a love she could confide in, pure, true, unshaken from her infancy. Her little figure nestled into his strong arms as he lifted her from the sofa, and her head sank down wearily yet trustingly upon the broad shoulder that never yet turned away from its pressure.

"Yes," he said as he put her on her bed and sat down beside her, "yes, pet, I see what your eyes are asking me, and I will tell you all I know. Better tell you than have you in a brain fever with conjecture. You see they calculated to have a twenty-four hours' start, as this is a holiday, but there was some suspicion roused by Mr. Leslie's proceedings yesterday, and to-day some of the directors went to the bank, too late to prevent but in time to discover the abduction. They went at once to the house. The old gentleman left early this morning; Harold at noon. It is a bad business! If it were only a money loss, pet, I would not play the stern father to your love, but disgrace has never touched our name."

"And shall not through me! It will be a hard fight, father, but I will live it down."

"That's my brave girl! Shall"—and the loving voice sank to a whisper—"shall I say a prayer for my child to-night?"

"Here—now—papa."

And while the echo of the band playing a Strauss waltz came floating up the broad staircase, and the faint sound of moving feet and merry voices mingled with the music, in the room above the father prayed that the young girl, for whose pleasure the gaiety had been awakened, might have strength to bear the sorrow that evening had brought to her happy life.

Many of the guests had departed before the host entered the drawing-room again, and soon the quiet of the house was unbroken, save by the stealthy feet of the servants as they made all fast before retiring.

In the cold gray light of the early winter morning, alone in her room, Anna Leigh looked upon her dead past and her future.

She was a very fairy in face and form, this little heroine of mine; was small, graceful, and wonderfully pretty.

Her deep blue eyes were childlike in their frank

innocence, and around her shoulders clusters of sunny curls fell like a shower of golden threads.

From her babyhood she had known no grief. Her mother died before she had learned to lip her name, and her father's widowed sister had filled her place from the hour of her death.

Loving her tall, magnificent father with an almost worshipping love, Anna had been repaid by the tenderest, most caressing affection ever bestowed upon a child.

Surrounded by the purest Christian influences, her religion had been one of the beauties of her life, gilding and refining all else.

Then the love that had grown so unconsciously in her heart was almost a childish passion, so long ago seemed its commencement.

As she sat in the low arm-chair before the fire on that cold morning she let her thoughts dwell upon Harold as she believed him to be.

The tall, manly figure, the frank, open face, the voice ringing and cheerful; not one memory was there of an act or word that was not open and frank as the sunshine.

Harold Leslie a swindler!

It was very hard to realize, and the more memory painted of his life the more clearly it contradicted the supposition.

"It is false!" she said, at last, in her heart. "He is noble, good, and true, and he will yet prove himself so. I cannot grieve father by any violent assertion of what I believe, but I will wait! I am yours, Harold, yours only. My promise was not made for a day or a week, but for life, and if you never come to claim it I will die, true to my first, only love."

She pressed her lips to the diamond circlet upon her finger, and in her heart pledged herself to keep her betrothal vow.

Mr. Leigh looked anxiously at the pale little face as Anna came in to breakfast, but she gave him a brave, sweet smile, and he was satisfied.

"I never dreamed the little witch had so much pride," he said to his sister.

"She's a true Leigh," was the proud answer.

And Anna only smiled, thinking the day would come when she might confess that more than pride sustained her.

It was a sore struggle at first for Anna Leigh to enter again into society soon enough to prevent conjecture as to her withdrawal.

Her engagement was so recent that no certain tidings of it were afloat, and the New Year's party, planned that the loving father might introduce his intended son-in-law to his friends, had passed without any suspicion being aroused of the failure of its main object.

The days crept wearily to the girl's darkened life.

In vain she brought pride, religion and duty to bear upon her heart; there was still ever present the bitter, wearing sense of loneliness and pain.

She loved her father fondly, and she loved her aunt, but she had given to Harold a deeper, stronger love than either, and her heart cried out against the cruel separation and the cloud upon his name.

Could she have thought him the unworthy man the public voice proclaimed him to be she had pride enough to have thrust his love from her heart, even if she broke it with the rupture; but her faith was not yet shaken.

There was some mystery yet to be explained: he had been forced, perhaps, to join his father, implicated innocently. She knew nothing of business arrangements, but she was sure he would return yet, unspotted, and prove his innocence.

Nearly a year had passed, and no news had been obtained of the defaulters. The bank was closed, and the directors trying to meet some of the claims upon them. Executions against the name of the president had gone up from merchants crippled or ruined, from widows and orphans beggared, from old men and women who had been years toiling for the sums invested, from sufferers and sympathizers, till Anna's heart would cower and shrink as if from a blow whenever the name fell upon her ears. Yet in her heart she gave the lie to every word that touched her lover's good name.

Anna's face had changed in these months of suspense and trial. From a careless child she had become a thoughtful woman, bearing a secret sorrow hidden from every eye. The laughing eyes of old were now earnest and grave; the smiling lips firmer, the face less mobile, yet sweet and winning in its expression of dignity. A tiny woman, but winsome and lovely in her dignified grace.

Leon Markham worshipped her. It is not too strong a word to paint the passionate adoration he poured forth at her feet. He had guessed something on that New Year's night when he missed her from the room, but her reappearance a few days later, her gentle loveliness all unchanged, with only a dignity that might be the throwing aside of childishness, completely deceived him.

He had none of the claim of childhood's acquaintance, for he had come to Anna's native place but a few years before. There was everything to favour him. His position and family were good, he was wealthy and talented, so without much fear he went to James Leigh for permission to address his daughter. The father was delighted.

Here was a chance to blot out entirely the memory of the prior engagement, if—if—his thoughts halted over that if.

Anna's demeanour was not that of one who had forgotten.

Yet he was sincere when he bade Leon Markham good speed in his wooing.

I wish I could paint for you this young gentleman who loved Anna Leigh. He was handsome, yet it was not mere outline of feature that made his face so winning.

There was a charm in the earnest expression of his full dark eyes, a feeling of security in the play of the beautiful mouth, a beauty of expression that made trust cling instinctively to this man wherever he went.

He was that rarely perfect combination, a Christian gentleman.

Seeing these two in the highest attributes of their hearts, you can picture the torture of that interview when Leon besought Anna to be his wife. She admired, respected, trusted him, but there was no love in her heart for any but Harold.

Noting the agony on his face when she told him she could give him only friendship, her womanly pity was roused, and with the quick intuition of one noble heart reading another, she threw herself upon his generosity, and showed him her heart.

"The whole world believes him unworthy," she said, in conclusion, "and I have never, even to my father, spoken his name since the fatal New Year's night, but I can be the wife of no man but Harold Leslie."

"If your faith be shaken?" he questioned.

"If he prove unworthy, my love may die. I cannot tell, for I cannot believe him what the world says he is."

There was a moment of silence, so deep that even the breathing of the two disturbed it.

Then he arose from his seat and stood before her.

"I thank you for your confidence," he said, in low, tender tones, "and from my heart I pray that your faith may prove true."

She arose, too, as he spoke, and placed her little hands in his.

Twice she tried to speak, but the words died on her lips.

It had been an hour of intense mental pain, and she was delicately organized and felt such keenly.

"I am your friend?" he asked.

"My brother," she said, softly.

"So be it. Remember, if I can serve you, my life is at the call of my dear little sister," and he bent over and kissed the sunny hair rippling from her broad forehead, and so left her, comforted and soothed, to carry away his own agony, and fight down the bitterest torture of his life. Said it not truly this was a Christian gentleman?

Three years glided away, and Leon Markham had visited many spots where tourists love to linger.

His home had grown insupportable when the hope that had made his love-life beautiful was wrested from him, and he wandered away in quest of change and excitement.

It was early winter, and he was in Italy, when, wandering one day through the streets of Rome, he met what seemed to him the shadow of Harold Leslie.

There was a moment's pause, then hand grasped hand in cordial pressure.

"You are ill?" was Leon's first question.

"I have been, may be again. I hope so," was the desponding answer. "How long is it since you left?"

"Nearly three years."

"Do you hear often?"

"Never, scarcely. I have no correspondent."

"Then you—my father? I did not know but—"

"What? I am your friend, Harold."

"My father died, you know, in Florence, three months ago, of malarious fever. I had never found him in all these years, but he saw my name on a list of arrivals there and sent for me. It is a long story, Leon."

There was something almost pitiful in the pleading eyes he raised to his friend's face.

"Come to my room, and tell me all," said Leon. "It is no idle curiosity which prompts me."

It was but a short walk, and when once the tale was commenced Harold poured it forth in terse, hurried words.

He had found upon his table, on that fatal New Year's Day, a note from his father bidding him farewell, and hinting at his crime.

At once he had followed him, but was too late to catch the steamer to New York.

Waiting until the next, he had tried for three years to find Norris Leslie, and the last year published his name wherever he went, hoping it might catch his father's eyes.

The one aim and hope of his life had been to persuade his father to restore the ill-gotten wealth, and clear his name.

At Florence he was summoned to Norris Leslie's death-bed, and gained his point.

All that was left of the money so fraudulently obtained was sent in trusty hands; but, unknown to his son, his father had also transmitted a letter, clearing the young man's name from all blame, stating his course, and amply exonerating him from any share in the swindle, or knowledge of his contemplation.

It was a long, sad story.

"I never knew of the letter till I saw it published," said Harold. "My father is buried in Florence, under his own name. He assumed one was only dropping the surname, and it is recorded as Norris."

"But what are you doing?"

"Painting portraits. Very poor daubs too, I fear, but I manage to live."

"You will return, now, to your home?"

"Never! In fact, Leon, you don't know all."

"But I know this," he answered, firmly, though the words seemed to burn his lips. "Anna Leigh trusted you through all, and loves you still."

"Leon! You would not deceive me?"

"I had it from her own lips."

There was a New Year's party at Leigh House a few weeks after the above conversation.

It was the first one given since the night when Norris Leslie ran away from his native city, to die in Florence.

Anna Leigh was a graceful, pretty hostess, and the light had come back to her eyes, the spring to her step, for beside her stands the tall, manly figure of one who has come home to live down his father's shame in his own upright life.

Leon Markham is there too, and if his heart bleeds yet from his old wounds, he gives no sign to his "little sister," as she raises her grateful glance to his face, and thanks him for the crowning blessing of her life. S. A. F.

CURIOUS RAILWAY STATISTICS.—A remarkable diversity continues to characterize the travelling propensities of the several parts of the kingdom. Taking a hundred passengers of each of the three great territorial divisions, there is no marked variation in the first-class list, but England appears at the bottom. In the second-class list we may reckon 80 Englishmen, 11 Scotchmen, and nearly 30 Irishmen; while of the third-class we have 59 Englishmen, 76 Scotchmen, and 57 Irishmen. Thus the third-class fare seems to have special attractions for the Scotchman, who, on the other hand, pays small regard to the second-class, which he patronizes to a less extent than he does the first-class.

ANOTHER NOVELTY.—Cigar tubes are now selling in London, which, after being used for a short time, develop a picture previously invisible. Chemical analysis shows that these are photographs prepared in the ordinary way, and then made invisible by the aid of bi-chloride of mercury—the same process, in fact, by which the "magic photographs" are prepared. Magic photographs may be made visible by the application of hyposulphite of soda, and in the cigar tubes the heat and ammonia from the tobacco have the same effect. It is probable, therefore, that these tubes were originated by some genius who accidentally discovered the effect of tobacco juice on invisible photographs.

JEREMY CATNACH, OF SEVEN DIALS.—To him is due the honour of publishing "songs three yards a penny," a price which, in former times, was charged for a single ballad. His accumulated stock of songs, last dying speeches, murders, doubtful slanders, &c., was something immense; and, prior to retiring from business, he is said to have amassed a fortune of over £10,000. During Queen Caroline's trial he could not produce his sheets, "beautifully illustrated," fast enough to supply the demand. His hand-presses were going day and night, and many a weighty load of "coppers" his journeymen took away with them; for, as we have been informed by an old journeyman printer, he always paid their wages in coppers.—*The Stationer and Fancy Trades' Register.*

CURIOSITIES OF GENEALOGY.—As a specimen of the curiosities of genealogy we quote a statement of Anderson's about the royal descents of the Egmont branch of the House of Yvery. He assures us that they are descended fifty-two times from William the Conqueror, forty-five times from the Royal Family since the Conquest, eight times from the Kings of Scotland, and twenty-eight times from the ancient Kings of Ireland. To collect these details is an amusement characteristic of the merely heraldic mind. Probably it is the long dwelling on such fascinating

minutiae which makes the herald expose himself to those darts which in every age riddle his tabard. "Old Peter Le Neve, the herald," says Horace Walpole, "thought ridicule consisted in not being connected with an old family." This was the man who wrote his epitaph on Orage. "Here lies the last, who died before the first of his family." It was not without justice that Edmund Burke objected to such writers, their disposition to make the possession of rank a proof of the possession of merit. "Men," he says, "who when alive were the pity of their acquaintance make as good a figure as the best of them in the pages of Edmondson or Collins." So strangely are objects of vision transfigured when seen through an atmosphere of or and gules!—*Three Hundred Years of a Norman House.*

OLIVER DARVEL.

CHAPTER XXII.

AFTER changing his dress the prince went to the apartment of his wife, to satisfy himself that she had obeyed his commands.

He expected to find her in a paroxysm of tempestuous indignation; but to his surprise and pleasure he found her standing before her mirror, already arrayed in a magnificent toilet, which set off her stately figure to the best advantage.

She was deadly pale, and there was a smouldering fire in her light blue eyes that showed the repressed rage that glowed in her outraged heart; but she had learned one lesson that night, which was, that only by dissembling her true feelings could she hope to evade the iron despotism under which she had fallen so far as to enable her to communicate with those who could rescue her from the wretch who had so remorselessly crushed her in the first moment in which he found her helplessly in his power.

She now comprehended the base nature which had unveiled itself before her that night, and the love she had borne her husband was destroyed at one blow beneath the indignant contempt he had aroused in her undisciplined nature.

The prince surveyed her approvingly, and then said:

"You would really be radiant if you were not so pale. Put on a *soppon* of rouge and you will dazzle the eyes of my people. Oh, my *belle*, you really are a beautiful woman, and I am proud to claim you as mine."

Her lips slightly curled, and with sarcastic emphasis she replied:

"The pride is mutual, Prince of Berchtols. Have I not the right to look upon my husband as the noblest and most considerate of men? Put on the rouge, Katrina, for henceforth I am to play the part of the obedient wife."

The scoffing bitterness of her tone made the girl tremble. She knew that something had gone wrong, but what it was she had been unable to fathom; for by the time she had sufficiently thawed herself after her long journey to appear at her lady's toilet the princess had, in a measure, recovered from the stunning shock she had received, and she appeared only anxious to make as imposing an appearance as possible before the numerous retainers of the household.

She seemed absorbed in painful thought, and scarcely spoke until the prince came in. To her last speech he gravely replied:

"That is the only character befitting a wife, madam, and the men of my race have not been in the habit of permitting the women they favoured to trample them into the dust. Least of all would I consent to such a degradation as that."

The proud blood leaped to her cheek, deepening the rosy tint the girl had applied to it to an angry glow, and after a struggle with herself she spoke in French:

"I have taken the first lesson in my duty to-night, and however inhumanly given, I shall not forget to profit by it, you may be sure. But know one thing, bridegroom of mine, and lay it to your heart. Through the love I once felt for you you might have moulded even my fiery nature to your will, but you chose not that method, because, perchance, it might have made me too happy. You preferred to crush me into submission by one fell blow, which has destroyed confidence, affection and respect. If anything be left that is worth having I do not know what it is, yet you profess your intention to hold me by force in bonds that have become odious to me. In the end you will find how much it will cost you to do so; for a tigress can read, even if she be chained."

The prince smiled in such a manner as to show his white and even teeth as he carelessly replied in the same language:

"Men have been found who possess the power to tame the most ferocious beasts, my dear princess, and I flatter myself that you will find that I am one of

them. I find you adorable even in your wildest tantrums, and I would no more consent to give you up than I would agree to restore the wealth with which you have so generously endowed me. But this is nonsense, Gertrude. I have only paid you back for your scandalous conduct towards me since that false letter was sent to you. Be once more the loving and trusting woman I thought I had made my own, and we shall be happy."

"Happy!" she bitterly repeated. "Oh, mockery, mockery! I believe now that the letter told the truth, but so changed are my feelings towards you that my rival is welcome to establish her superior claims upon you. I will gladly exchange the misery of being your lawful wife for the disgrace of being illegally wedded. I only ask to be freed from you, Prince of Berchtols, at any cost to myself."

Her glittering eyes and panting breath showed how strong an effort she made to speak with tolerable composure, but the listener was unmoved.

He tauntingly said:

"I regret to inform you that the cost to myself would be too severe to permit you to make yourself the talk of the country. There is no rival in existence whose claims are paramount to yours, and I intend to hold you in bonds as firm as love and interest can rivet. Here your flights of temper will only give zest to the dulness of a country life, and when they exceed the limits of my patience I can seek some gayer scene, leaving you to be looked after by my excellent uncle, who intends to use every effort to make himself acceptable to you, for he greatly laments your singular distaste to him."

A single flash of lightning gleamed from her eyes, but the words she would have uttered were stopped by a sudden choking sensation in her throat; the sob of hysteric passion that arose she resolutely stifled, and after a pause she offered him her hand, and in an unnaturally quiet tone said:

"We can go, then, and let the baron commence his fascinations as soon as possible. In my own house he will find me quite willing to be deceived and flattered as much as he may find it to his interest to attempt. Here I can only treat him with the consideration due to a guest beneath my own roof; and as it is your will to retain him here, I submit with a grace becoming the new character I am henceforth to assume."

The prince took her offered hand, marvelling at the wonderful self-control she so suddenly manifested, yet half afraid that it only concealed some new device to enable her eventually to defy him.

But he comforted himself with the conviction that himself and his uncle united must prove more than a match for this solitary woman, imperious and untamable as her nature might be.

He led her to the library in which Oliver had been received, and they were presently joined by the baron, who talked as gracefully and wittily as if nothing unpleasant had occurred.

In a few moments supper was announced. The prince offered his arm, and led his wife to a large state dining-room hung with tapestry, and wreathed with faded banners.

At the upper end of the apartment a platform was raised two feet above the floor, over which was a canopy draped with crimson velvet. Beneath this a table with three covers was placed, and the long one intended for the retainers of the household stood on the floor below.

The Prince of Berchtols had followed an ancient custom of his family in exhibiting his bride to his retainers on the occasion of her first visit to the castle.

For generations the lords of Berchtols had kept up a remnant of their ancient feudal state, and once, at least, the heir of the principality, with his newly wedded bride, ate in the same hall with the retainers belonging to the estate.

Among all the pictured faces that adorned the portrait gallery of this noble house no fairer or more haughty one was to be found than that which now bowed and smiled mechanically upon the crowd of faces that looked up to the spot on which she stood, and drank the strong *kirchschasser* to the health and prosperity of their new lady.

At moments all that had lately passed between herself and her husband seemed to the princess a horrible and unreal dream, from which she must presently awake. But the presence of the detested baron again stung her into consciousness of its wretched reality, and her heart died within her with a feeling of sick loathing towards the new duties and responsibilities which she had been so brutally assured she would not be permitted to evade.

But she maintained outward composure, and although the lights more than once swam before her vision, she did not for one instant lose the consciousness of the deadly pain that tugged at her heart-strings.

The baron made a little speech in praise of the new

lady of Berchtols, and the good fortune of the prince in winning her. This was most enthusiastically responded to by one of the young retainers, as the representative of the others, and then the lord and lady sat down to their table, which was a signal for the people to do the same at theirs.

The lower board groaned with substantial viands, and huge bottles of strong waters were placed at convenient intervals, from which the drinking-cups were replenished.

The viands placed before the aristocratic party were more delicate, and they were served on silver and in Bohemian glass.

The baron devoted himself to his new niece.

He sedulously attended to her wants, uttered flatteries enough to have turned her head had she only believed them, and used his best efforts to be witty and amusing.

The princess scarcely touched the food he placed upon her plate, but she complained of great thirst, which she asked for water to assuage, but the baron laughingly said:

"Water, my dear niece, would only increase your thirst, and it would be a reflection on our hospitality to allow you to drink anything but what we have on such an occasion as this. We have some of a rare vintage, and of so ripe an age; that a headache is not to be found in a hogshead of it. Hugel, bring the bottle with the green seal, that her highness may try some of the nectar it contains."

The princess attempted to decline it, but the baron insisted so much that at length her husband said:

"What is the use of so many words, Gertrude? You can, at least, taste the wine my uncle so highly recommends. It is my wish that you shall do so."

"My dear Ernest, I beg that you will not insist on anything that is displeasing to the princess," broke in the baron. "I should be sorry, indeed, to force such wine as this on one unwilling to partake of it. Pray do as you please, my dear niece, but I assure you that you will find this tripe unvalued."

Wearied and annoyed by his persistency, the princess said:

"You may pour out a cup for me, and I will obey the command laid on me so far, at least, as to taste it."

"Oh, ho! you must do more than that, my lady, for the wine is worth more than its weight in gold, and unless you mean to quaff at least a bumper I will leave it for some other time."

By this time the restraint the impatient actress had put upon herself was beginning to fail, and she haughtily cried out:

"What matters the cost of the wine? If I am to know what it is like, pour it out at once, for I am weary of this scene."

With an obsequious bow the baron hastened to obey; the eyes of the princess were fixed upon him, and as the wine was decanted into the ruby-hued goblet she distinctly saw something dropped into it from the hollow of his hand.

The smouldering fury that raged within her was aroused into fierce action by this discovery. She clutched the offered goblet in her hand, arose and cried out:

"Men of Berchtols,—I call on you all to witness to the fact that Baron Arndheim has attempted to drug me on the first night I arrived at my new home. I believe there is poison in this wine; I saw him drop it in the goblet, and I claim justice at your hands."

Her cheeks were flushed, her eyes glittering with aroused feeling, and the baron, fearing the effect her words might produce, turned to the excited crowd below, and in a loud voice said:

"Vassals of Berchtols,—Never believe the accusation this beautiful demon has brought against one so long known to you. I will prove to you the falsehood of her words by drinking the draught myself. Give me the goblet, princess, and I will drain it to the last drop, if that will satisfy you of my innocence."

He made an effort to take it from her hand, and the prince arose with such evil determination in his eyes that his wife knew she would never be permitted to retain the proof of her accusation long enough to have the wine tested.

With this conviction her natural recklessness returned, and as Prince Ernest attempted to grasp the goblet she contemptuously tossed its contents into the baron's face, again crying out, in her clear, piercing tones:

"I commend the poisoned draught to your own false lips, and I hope enough of its contents will enter them to silence them for ever in the stillness of death."

The prince grasped her hand, tore from it the costly flagon and dashed it in fragments to the floor. He binned to her ear:

"Daring as you are, you shall pay dearly enough for this, my lady."

Then turning towards his dependants, he grasped his wife around the waist and cried out:

"Men of Bercholz.—Look at this beautiful fairy! She lured me into a marriage with her without letting me know that she is subject to attacks of insanity. One of them is now upon her, and that sufficiently explains her conduct. When I discovered her misfortune I brought her hither to be taken proper care of, and this castle is henceforth to be her home. I have followed the custom of my family in presenting my bride to you on this occasion, but you will fully understand that this will be her last public appearance for some time. Till she is better I shall keep her under such restraint as will be necessary for her own well-being."

The unhappy lady vainly struggled to free herself from the vice-like embrace in which she was held, but she fiercely replied:

"It is false! I am not mad! I never have been mad! and he who will convey to my kinsman, Count Guillardstein, an account of what has happened here to-night will gain a rich reward when I am released from the odious chains that bind me to Prince Ernest of Bercholz."

Murmurs of compassion arose, but they did not take such a form as to promise aid to the unhappy wife.

"Poor thing! how very mad she must be," said one, "to speak thus of my lord." "Only a little while ago the people who came with them were telling how much in love with him she is," was the remark of another; and the helpless princess saw that her violence had prejudiced her cause in the eyes of these simple people.

All power of endurance seemed suddenly to forsake her, and she fell back in a violent paroxysm of hysterics.

Her husband lifted her in his arms, and with the aid of his uncle bore her screaming and struggling to her own apartment, where they left her with her attendant.

With considerable difficulty Katrina disrobed her, and finally succeeded in placing her in bed, but in a state of such utter exhaustion as deeply alarmed her. Seeing that she lay perfectly quiet, the girl ventured to leave her a few moments alone while she went to report her condition to the baron, as she had been ordered.

When she tapped on his door he ordered her to enter, and as he saw who it was he calmly said:

"So it's you at last, Katrina. I have been expecting you for some time, and I have a mixture for your lady already prepared. Give her twenty drops of this elixir every two hours, but do not let her suspect that I prepared it, for she has taken up a most unaccountable prejudice against me, and she might refuse to take it. You will see that a few drops of this wonderful liquid will act on her nerves like magic."

Katrina held the vial doubtfully in her hand, and steadily regarded the placid face of the baron as she faltered:

"Are—are you quite sure that this will do her no harm, Herr Baron? She seems to be in a very critical condition."

"Pooh! it is only the effects of the passion into which she worked herself up. If you had been in her service a month you would begin to understand what a firebrand she is, and how necessary it is to give her something that will quiet her down. I only wish to try my skill upon her sufficiently to bring her the repose she so much needs. Give her the drops regularly, and she will soon fall into a natural sleep. Remember that your master and I will both hold you responsible for the faithfulness with which you fulfil your bargain with us. No injury is designed to your mistress, and if she be not relieved by my skill, she may die in one of those violent paroxysms of causeless rage."

The girl shuddered, and in a subdued tone replied:

"I will do your bidding, Herr Baron; you may be sure that nothing shall be wanting on my part."

"See that it is so."

And Katrina glided from the room paler than when she had entered it, and returned to her mistress.

The princess was now too much exhausted to oppose anything that was done, and she mechanically swallowed the liquid that was placed to her lips.

The baron's words soon proved true, for she fell into a feverish slumber, through which the sobbing sounds in her throat still continued.

Her attendant sat beside her, and at intervals sufficiently aroused her to administer the drops, until they produced a sleep so deep that she thought it unnecessary to force her to swallow more of them.

The night waned; Katrina dozed in her chair, for she was much fatigued with the day's journey, and she was profoundly unconscious of the stealthy entrance of the baron and the critical examination he gave the patient.

He smiled complacently and muttered:

"It works—it works my purpose well, and now, my imperious dame, I hold you under my thumb from this time forth. We shall have no more bursts of fury—no more taunts from those lips. When the rose returns to them no bitterness will be left to flow from them—they will utter only such gentle inanity as will be well pleasing to me and to him to whom you belong."

He noiselessly glided from the room, and, satisfied of the success of his potion, sought his own couch.

The princess slept heavily till late on the following day, and when she awoke she was evidently delirious, though she was no longer violent.

In much alarm Katrina again sought the baron to report her condition.

He shook his head ominously as he listened, and finally said:

"As I feared, the violent emotions from which she suffered have brought on an attack of fever. If what you tell me be true, Katrina, your lady will have a sharp struggle for her life; but if she be faithfully nursed she will win through it. We must save her for my nephew, for in spite of the shameful treatment he has received from her he is madly in love with her."

The girl seemed struck with remorse. In a voice of anguish she cried:

"Oh, my poor dear mistress! I will do all that I can for her, Herr Baron, and I do hope that she is not in as much danger as you think. She is young and strong, and she will get over this attack."

"Yes—yes—I hope and believe she will; but it will tax all my skill to bring her through the illness I anticipate. I will examine her condition myself and determine on the course of treatment that will be necessary. But it will not be well to betray to her that I am her physician, for she has taken a most capricious and unfounded dislike to me."

While he was speaking he moved towards the apartment of the princess, and found his nephew beside her, attentively regarding her as she lay, pallid and distraught, upon the bed.

Prince Ernest had visited the room many times that day, for he was fully aware of the hazardous experiment going on, and most anxious as to its result.

The condition in which his wife now lay alarmed him, and he hastily turned to his uncle and asked:

"Can you do anything for her? She seems to be quite unconscious of all that is passing around her."

"Yes, I think I can deal with her case. You may set your fears at rest, Ernest, for I assure you that your wife shall not die."

"Thank you for that, uncle; save her to me if possible."

His voice seemed to stifle with emotion, and Katrina thought:

"How tenderly he loves her; I must do my part towards restoring her to him."

She little dreamed how arduous that undertaking would prove.

For many days the princess was violently ill; wild with delirium and parched with fever, requiring constant care both day and night, and her faithful nurse was almost worn out with her labour of love; for in spite of her compact with the baron and his nephew Katrina had become warmly attached to her mistress.

When this phase of the disease passed away it left the patient in a vague and wandering state of mind, and she would often press her hands upon her head and mutter:

"Empty—empty; all power of thought gone. Oh! when will vitality come to my brain again?"

As strength slowly came back she seemed to yearn for the presence of her husband, and she would cling to him with the pettish fondness of an indulged child.

He, on his part, devoted himself to her through many hours in each day, and he would sit beside her, holding her hands in his own, and talking such sweet nonsense to her as she now delighted to hear.

All of her fire was gone—all memory of the past seemed swept away, and she only lived in the present hour. She never referred to her former life, and seemed perfectly contented with the one she now led.

As her strength returned the clear roses of health bloomed on her cheek again, and her wasted form resumed its roundness. Her appetite was pampered in every possible manner; whatever contributed to her physical enjoyment was procured at any cost or trouble, and with this she seemed perfectly satisfied.

The mind had evidently been paralyzed beneath the skillful treatment of her physician, and only the animal nature was left to pamper and gratify.

The change in her feelings towards Baron Ardeheim was as marked as anything else. She became fond of him, and often showed herself to the wondering household leaning on his arm and talking to him with the most affectionate confidence.

At first this calm was charming to the prince, but he gradually wearied of the insipidity of the fair doll

whose fiery soul seemed to have been chained at his command.

He soon solaced himself with the monotony of his own home by frequent visits to his infirm uncle, the Elector of Lichtenfels, and in his small court he rejoined in every dissipation with a zest proportioned to his long abstinence from such pleasures.

During his absence the princess moped and wearied for his return; but she always received him with a smiling welcome, and seemed never to dream of reproaching him for his neglect.

In truth, she was reduced to such a state of inertia by the constant use of the drug which was nightly infused in her drink that the most imperious tyrant could not have desired a more passive slave than this high-born and imperious woman had become.

The domestics talked among themselves of how strangely she had changed, but they all agreed that it was for the better, for Prince Ernest could never have lived with so high-tempered a creature as she was when she first came to the castle.

What had produced the change they could not divine, but the most of them inclined to the belief that their lady was certainly mad on the night of that strange outbreak, and her malady had only assumed a milder phase since her long and dangerous illness.

So the baron had reason to congratulate himself on the success of his skill, and he complacently lent himself to any little plan of amusement proposed by the half-demented lady.

It was no longer dangerous to permit her to be visited by the neighbouring families, and as spring opened guests came and went, and a round of social intercourse that seemed to interest her was established. This provincial society appeared to please the taste of the once fastidious princess as well as the courtly circles in which her early years had been passed, and the true, simple-hearted people among whom she now mingled felt a tender pity for her want of sense, and believed that the great wealth she brought him must have induced the Prince of Bercholz to marry this beautiful statue, who only opened her lips to utter the merest commonplace nonsense.

CHAPTER XXXIII

LEFT to herself, and mistress of an independent fortune, Mabel Tilson soon arranged her future plan of life.

Mrs. Minturn had joyfully accepted her proposal to take up her residence beneath her roof, and Mabel found her an intelligent and congenial companion. Many years a childless widow, she had sought occupation and interest in the cultivation of a fine literary taste, and for the first time in her life the heiress was, in her own home, brought in contact with a mind that understood and sympathized with the peculiar bent of her own.

Books were a delight to both, and a portion of the abundant means of Miss Tilson was appropriated to the purchase of a select library, which was constantly increased by the newest and most valuable publications of the day.

When the weather permitted they went out in the carriage, but few guests were received at Fernely, for its mistress had not yet recovered sufficiently from the stunning blow she had received to desire much society.

For several months Mr. Tilson took no notice of his daughter, and she came to the painful conclusion that he had cast her off entirely.

But gradually curiosity to see what she was doing in her new home, and how she would bear the announcement of a piece of news he had for her, got the better of his resentment, and he came to the villa one bright evening in early spring.

He found his daughter in her pleasant sitting-room, reading aloud to her companion, while Mrs. Minturn occupied herself with her knitting.

Mabel started up with a cry of welcome, and rushed towards him with outstretched hands, exclaiming:

"Oh, father, dear father, how good you are to come at last to see me. I have so much desired to have you here, to show you how comfortably I am situated."

To this he gruffly replied:

"Umph! anybody could make themselves comfortable with all the money that has so shamefully fallen to you, and you could have had me here long ago if you had shown any disposition to be sociable with Ruth. She insisted on my coming this afternoon, or I shouldn't have done such a thing. I consider my wife as good as my daughter, Miss Tilson, and if you wish to keep on decent terms with me there must be some sort of compromise with regard to her."

Then turning abruptly to Mrs. Minturn, Mr. Tilson went on:

"I am glad to see you again, ma'am, and I dare say you were glad enough that my girl and me had

fallen out, as it got you into such a snug place as this, eh?"

A faint flush passed over the placid face of Mrs. Minturn, but she knew James Tilson of old, and she quietly replied:

"I was glad to come to Mabel, for she is a dear, good girl, and as affectionate to me as if I were her own mother. But I was sorry for the trouble between you, Mr. Tilson. You will not believe me, perhaps, but I only speak the truth."

"Oh, I daresay," was the sarcastic rejoinder; "but my loss has proved your gain; not that I lost much, except in having all my brother's money left away from me. Mabel was never much of a companion for me, and Ruth suits me far better. She is always merry when I come home, and I wouldn't change things at my house for all the foolish nonsense I see Mabel has already surrounded herself with."

He glanced contemptuously at the prettily furnished room, his eyes roving with marked disapprobation over the pictures and statuettes with which it was ornamented. Last of all, they fell on the portrait of his first wife, around the frame of which Mabel had woven a wreath of evergreens. He coldly said:

"It was as well to bring that here, for I had little value for it. A discontented spirit always looked out from its eyes, and made me recall, when I looked at it, the peevish and unreasonable temper of the original."

"Oh, father," cried Mabel, in a tone of passionate entreaty, "don't speak thus of the dead mother in the presence of her child. The eyes are sad, but not reproachful. Now that you have come to me, do not say anything that will make me regret that the visit has been made."

"Hoity toity! if that is all the reward I get for laying aside my own dignity so far as to come here at all, I may as well be gone at once."

He grasped his hat, as if about to take his departure, but Mabel took it from him, and begging his pardon for her hasty words, he permitted himself to be so far mollified as to accept a seat.

Mabel rang the bell and ordered refreshments, to which Mr. Tilson did ample justice, talking, in the meantime, in his usual rude and bitter way. When the luncheon was dispatched he then proceeded to develop the double purpose which had brought him there, for John Tilson never did anything without a motive.

He raised his wine-glass, and surveyed the ruby liquid through the glittering crystal; then suddenly placing it sharply upon the table, he said:

"You can afford to use such old glass as this, filled with wine that is good enough for a queen, yet you have never offered to pay a debt you owe my charming Ruth—the darling of my old age, and the solace of the home you chose to desert."

"I do not understand you, father. I am ready to pay any just claim that Mrs. Tilson may have against me, but this is the first time I have heard that such a one is in existence."

"Your memory must be very treacherous, then, Miss Tilson. Have you not a dressing-case that your mother once claimed, though I apprehend, as it was bought with my money, I have the best right to it. In defiance of Ruth's opposition, you took that from my house, and now have it in your possession. You proffered more than its value for it, but it seems that you really meant to appropriate it to your own use without making any return for it at all."

With a painful constriction of her heart at this proof of his mean subjection to his new wife, Mabel replied:

"I presume that Mrs. Tilson has sent you here to claim its value. I am quite ready to make good the words I uttered on that day when leaving your house; but I shall still think that I have the best right to such articles as were devoted to my mother's personal use."

He replied, in a blustering tone:

"No one sent me here. I came of my own free will; but if I am to furnish your step-mother with a new dressing-case in lieu of the one you appropriated, it is but just that the money to pay for it should come from your pocket and not from mine."

"I am quite ready to pay for it, father; at how much do you value it?"

"So—you're coming round, I perceive. Let me see; the thing cost twenty pounds when it was bought—an absurd sum to pay for such a piece of tomfoolery—but it was one of the wedding-presents, and as your mother had money of her own I could not give her anything mean on such an occasion as that. Since you're so anxious to keep it out of Ruth's possession, I think it will only be fair to make you pay twice its original cost."

Mabel changed colour at this mean extortion, but she silently arose and went into a back parlour where her desk was placed, and filled a cheque on her banker for the sum demanded.

She felt deeply humiliated that her father could act

thus, but had John Tilson known the real value of the dressing-case to his own interests he would never have parted from it on any terms.

When Mabel returned and presented the order she said:

"I would have freely given four times that amount sooner than have had an article that was prized by my mother fall into the hands of any other than myself."

He put the cheque in his pocket-book, and brusquely replied:

"You needn't say any more about it. I know that you only pay this large sum to keep it out of Ruth's hands, but she is a good wife to me, and I insist that you shall treat her with the consideration that is due to your step-mother. If you desire to keep on decent terms with me you must pay some attention to Mrs. Tilson."

Mabel changed colour, but she firmly said:

"When you married your cook, sir, you could never have expected that I would consent to make her a companion. I shall always be most happy to see you in my house, but I cannot invite Mrs. Tilson to accompany you hither."

He angrily exclaimed:

"But for your uncle's absurd will you would have had no choice in the matter. You must have remained under my roof and associated with the woman I have married."

"You forget, sir, that it was distinctly intimated to me that I should not be permitted to remain. I should have been left to take care of myself in the best way I could, if my uncle's wealth had not so unhappily fallen to me."

"Unhappily! Are you a born idiot, Mabel, to talk in that absurd manner? Are you still mourning over the fate of that milkop, who could never do anything useful in his life?"

Mabel burst into a passion of tears, and Mrs. Minturn arose and put her arm around her as she reproachfully said:

"For shame, Mr. Tilson. How could you so rudely touch a wound that has not yet had time to close?"

"Haven't she profited more by the lad's suicide than she could by his living to the age of Methusalem? She's got all the money my brother left, and that should console her, I am sure."

"But it does not—it does not," sobbed the poor girl. "I would give it all—all, and cheerfully labour for my bread, if its sacrifice could bring back my poor Oliver to life."

"Then, maybe, you'll be glad to believe something I found in the morning paper, and brought here with me. Do you know that a suspicion is afloat that my precious nephew was not the man who killed himself? that he only assumed the suicide's name and feloniously appropriated his money? I intend to look sharply into this, and if it proves true I shall claim that Oliver has forfeited the estate left by my brother, and James's will thus becomes null and void. I can then claim all these fine things and hold them as my own."

At this unfeeling address Mabel sank back nearly insensible. She faintly gasped:

"Father, if you have any mercy for me explain what you mean. Oh! if Oliver be only living, I can forgive him everything—anything. I know that he is as incapable of committing a theft as I should be. If he claimed money it was lawfully his, I am sure."

"You won't find many to agree with you in that opinion, Miss Tilson. But here is the paragraph I referred to—it will tell you as much as I know myself about the affair."

Regardless of her overwhelming emotion, he coolly handed her a slip of paper, on which, after several efforts to steady her vision, Mabel read the following announcement:

"A singular rumour has been circulated in the city within the last few days. Our readers may remember a suicide which attracted much attention a few months since, occasioned by events which subsequently happened. Within a few days after his (supposed) death Mr. Darvel fell heir to a handsome fortune, which has since passed into the possession of a near relative."

"It is now affirmed, on what authority we know not, that the person who destroyed himself was a Frenchman named Ledru, who lodged in the same house with young Darvel, and became very intimate with him. A marked resemblance is said to have existed between the two men, and this probably suggested the deception that was afterwards carried out."

"Darvel's motive for assuming the character of Ledru may be found in the fact that the latter had a considerable sum of money lying in his banker's hands, which, after his death, was appropriated by his double. Circumstances lead to the belief that the Frenchman really committed suicide, for it seems that he held a secret of importance to some foreign

personage—important enough to be dreaded—and he chose the alternative of death in preference to the betrayal of his trust."

"The unfortunate Darvel had scarcely secured his booty when he was pounced on by the agent sent hither to ferret Ledru out, and carried away so secretly that no trace of him was left. On discovering his error the same person returned to London to prosecute inquiries concerning a child who was left by the suicide among strangers, with no clue to the spot on which she was to be found."

"It is altogether a most mysterious and unexplainable affair; but if Oliver Darvel be still living he must feel that the way of the transgressor is hard, for by grasping the petty sum left to Ledru's credit at the bank he forfeited his claim to a rich inheritance, and brought upon himself the ban of society. Should he ever venture to return to this country he will doubtless be prosecuted for the felony he has perpetrated."

Mabel scarcely knew how she got through this long and rather obscure statement, but her first emotion was one of intense thankfulness. She covered her face with her hands a few moments, and her frame trembled with agitation; but when she again looked up a smile was beaming on her lips, and she reverently said:

"Thank heaven for all its mercies. Oliver living, freed from the awful sin of suicide. Oh! how shall I be able to live on till I ascertain the truth of these statements! Do not look at me as if I am demented, father. I know that Oliver has done nothing criminal; I would as soon believe that I had taken what I have no right to as to think it of him. He can explain all to my satisfaction, and I will suspend my judgment till we meet again; for if he be still on earth he will return to me; I am sure he will, for he knows how necessary I am to him. He also knows that he can trust to my love to forgive everything."

Her father contemptuously exclaimed:

"Mabel Tilson, have you forgotten that this wretched boy once resigned you himself at the command of my brother? What faith can you have in such a man as that, I ask? But there is one comfort—if he dares to come here again I will set the law upon his track."

Mabel dried her eyes, and more composedly said:

"It is true that Oliver gave me up at my uncle's command, but it was in the belief that I had repented my promise to him and was ready to give my hand to the suitor who had been chosen for me. Should my poor cousin return he will soon learn that I am free from any tie, and if he come to me I will receive him as one restored from the dead, and I will spend all I am worth to save him from the vengeance of the law."

Her father listened with bent brow and curling lip. He roughly said:

"If he is alive you have nothing you can justly call your own. In that case a very pretty claim can be made out in my favour. It will be a question for the lawyers to decide as to which is the legal heir, he or I: for while he lives you can have no claim on the property that was expressly willed to him. In case only of his death were you to come in. I came here to explain this to you, and to warn you that I am going to consult counsel to-morrow."

Mr. Tilson arose and took up his hat. Mrs. Minturn gently suggested:

"Will it not be best, sir, to defer your consultation with the lawyers until there is some certainty as to your nephew's fate? To act in the present position of affairs will look very much as if you are eager to strip your daughter of her fortune. I also believe that such a suit will involve you in heavy expense, without any ultimate benefit to yourself. Such precautions to exclude you from all interest in his estate were taken by your late brother that I hardly think a jury would be found to take it from Mabel to bestow it on you."

"That question would not be left to a jury to decide, madam. In such a case as this the great law officers of the crown must be the arbiters, and they will be governed by the statutes. I do believe that I can get the whole property if that boy is really proved a felon; and if I can do so, I certainly shall."

"I do not doubt your will to do so," replied Mrs. Minturn, gravely, "but I really think any action at present will be premature. As yet there seems to be no foundation, save vague rumours, for this newspaper article, and I strongly advise you to wait till there is at least some certainty that your nephew is still living before you take any steps in the matter."

"Thank you, madam, for the advice you so freely offer, but I really think I can manage my own affairs without it."

With this rebuff he turned to leave the room. Mabel rushed after him, grasped his hand, and impetuously cried:

"Oh, father, if Oliver be still living, and any harm comes to him through your means, I can never for-

give you. For once prove that you have a father's feelings for me, and refrain from following up this clue. Give my poor Oliver a chance to communicate with me without danger from the emissaries of the law. Oh, I believe that I shall go mad if you carry out your evil threat."

"I believe you are half mad now, Mabel, for no woman in her sane mind would consent to receive as her lover a man branded as a thief. I shall yet have to apply to the commissioners of lunacy to appoint me the guardian of your person and fortune. As to Oliver, if he dares to show his face in this country he shall find a mine prepared ready to explode and blow him to atoms. If I can only satisfy myself that he is living I can carry everything before me with a high hand, I can tell you. Good-morning. Since my wife is not good enough to be received by my aristocratic daughter, I shall come here no more till I appear to take possession as master."

With these harsh words he strode from the house, leaving Mabel in such a state of agitation as completely unnerved her.

(To be continued.)

FACETIÆ.

AN Irish sailor once visited a city where, he said, they copper-bottomed the tops of their houses with sheet-lead.

A YOUNG lady, whose father is improving the family mansion, insists upon having a beau window put in for her benefit.

"If you had avoided rum," said an innkeeper to a customer, "you could now ride in your carriage." "And you had never sold rum," said the bacchanal, "you would have been my driver."

A TURK who had lately arrived in Paris was asked how he liked a ball. "Ah!" said he, "these Europeans spoil everything. They make the men dance!"

COMPARISONS ARE ODIUS.—"Aw! how duth you like my mustache, Mith Laura?" Hoped a dandy to a merry girl. "Oh, very much. It looks like the fuzz on the back of a caterpillar."

A VERY volatile young lord, whose conquests in the female world were numberless, at last married. "Now, my lord, I hope you'll mend," said his wife. "Madam," said he, "this is my last folly."

MRS. GRUNDY.—There's that strange gentleman again, going to see Mrs. Boutyn! I think her husband ought to be warned of the danger. I'm sure it means no good! I never had strange gentlemen to visit me—except they had good reasons for coming.

A GENTLEMAN on circuit, narrating to Lord Norbury some extravagant feat in sporting, mentioned that he had lately shot thirty-three hares before breakfast. "Thirty-three hares!" exclaimed Norbury: "Zounds, sir, you must have been firing at a wig!"

A CERTAIN doctor was boasting of the eminence of his profession, and spoke loudly of the injustice of the world which was so satirical against it; "but," he added, "I have escaped, for no one complains of me." "That is more than you can tell, doctor," said a lady who was present, "unless you know what people say in the other world."

A WISE DECISION.—A gentleman going to take water at Whitehall Stairs cried out, as he came near to the place, "Who can swim?" "I, master," said forty bawling mouths; but one fellow turning about, said, "Sir, I cannot swim." "Then you are my man," said the gentleman, "for you will at least take care of me for your own sake."

ST. MARTIN'S BLESSING.—Recently a French farmer got up, hearing his calves making a noise in the stable. At the door he met a man, who said, "I am St. Martin, come to bless your beasts." The farmer returned and told his wife what the good St. Martin was doing. They were both very thankful. The next day the calves were nowhere to be found.

REPARTÉE.—A gentleman a short time since, in conversation with a lady from —, noticed particularly her head-dress of shells, and inquired what they had cost. She answered that she did not understand the circulating coin of this city. "What is the currency of —?" said he. "Wit and politeness, sir," was her reply, "which should be current everywhere."

A STARTLING JOKE.—Recently, in a street in Rome, a young man was seen at a fifth story in a position as if about to throw himself into the street; and a youth stood by expostulating, and trying to prevent him. Great excitement was caused in the street. A good old woman with her wits about her rushed out of a house with a couple of mattresses to descend the fire. The police were long in coming; the fire at the window grew more lively; there was a cry of "Gare!"

The young man had bounded over the balustrade and was whirling through space, and just clearing the mattresses, fell. . . . The crowd was rushing forward, when a woman's voice was heard at the fatal window, and before anyone could interfere, she jumped into eternity. A woman dressed in mourning, evidently the mother, followed; she seemed to allow herself to slip from the window, and fell with a crash into the street. The crowd rushed forward to the bodies, and raised up three—lay figures who did not require the benefit of the clergy. The room on the fifth floor was a studio, and the artists who perpetrated this lugubrious joke announced the termination of the seventeenth representation.

AN INDIFFERENT JUDGE.—A deceased upright and able Chief Justice was once obliged thus to address a jury—"Gentlemen of the jury, in this case the counsel on both sides are unintelligible, the witnesses on both sides are incredible, and the plaintiff and defendant are both such bad characters that to me it is indifferent which way you give your verdict."

ORIGIN OF SLANDER.—Mother Jasper told me that she heard Greatwood's wife say that John Hardstone's aunt mentioned to her that Mrs. Trusty was present when the Widow Parkman said Captain Hartwell's cousin thought Ensign Doolittle's sister believed that old Miss Orley reckoned that Sam Trifle's better half had told Mrs. Spalding that she heard John Brimmer's woman say that her mother told her that she heard her grandfather say that Mrs. Garden had two husbands.

A HUNGRY gentleman who sits down before a pound of beef steak, tender, juicy, and an inch thick, may not care two pence for the chemical analysis of the pride of the porter-house; but after dinner he may not object to know that 65 per cent. of his beautiful cut was water; that 19 per cent. will go to give him an aldermanic fleshiness; and that 16 per cent. is assigned to warm him and make him feel comfortable on a cold night.

LIGHT LITERATURE FOR RAILWAY READING.—Our young friends will thank us for directing attention to some Sanscrit books which we find announced. If the works are as charming as their titles, they have a rich treat in store. Here are a few of them: "Swapanchaksharimahantrastratara," "Trigunatmikakalikastotra," "Upangalalitavratodyapana," "Sankashtachaturthivratodyapana," and "Anantachaturdasvratakatha." They will relieve the tedium of a journey, especially if the train jolts a little, and they can be recommended for birthday presents.

AMERICAN LIQUORS.—During a recent investigation into certain establishments in New York charged with evading the Government tax, some curious developments have been made concerning the liquors with which that city is supplied. One house has been turning out vast quantities of an article retailed in Broadway at ten and fifteen cents per glass, which is composed of the following ingredients:—"To forty gallons of common whisky add thirty gallons of water, five gallons of the tincture of Guinea pepper, one quart tincture of pillory, two ounces of acetic ether, one and a half gallon of strong tea, and three ounces of pulverized charcoal."

THE LATE COLD WEATHER.

A person of gentlemanly exterior was brought before the Lord Mayor, charged with an attempt to pick pockets.

A gentleman stated in evidence that while waiting to cross towards the Bank, he happened to put his hand into his pocket and found the prisoner's hand there also. He immediately gave him in charge.

The policeman who took the prisoner in custody stated that his pockets were searched, but nothing was found on him. Prosecutor stated that he had lost nothing.

The prisoner being called on for his defence said he had lost his gloves, and put his hands in the prosecutor's pocket for warmth.

His Worship said he could not accept that explanation.

The prisoner then added that he was a railway contractor, and possibly the force of habit—

His worship immediately discharged him.—*Fun.*

A VERY BAD CASE-KNEE.—The consumption of cheese in England is stated to amount to the amazing quantity of 821,250,000 lbs. per annum. The statistics are not cheerful ones, for they prove how many people in our prosperous country have to dine off cheese, especially in the rural districts—or Rind-provinces. The strength of the agricultural labourer is too often derived solely from the mite he gets for dinner.—*Fun.*

SCALY PRACTICES.—Well might Mr. Hughes condemn the Lambeth small traders for dishonest weights and measures! No less than eight hundred and eight South London tradesmen have been fined during the past year at Newington Sessions for

unjust weights and measures. The fines have amounted to £1,285 16s. 6d.; but the evil has not decreased. Perhaps a re-fining process might do something to purify the morality of the low-lying neighbourhood.—*Fun.*

WHY is a butcher a very procrastinating person? Because he's always saying "buy" and "buy" to his customers.—*Fun.*

FARE ENOUGH.—Why are packet companies bound to pay your fare to and from the places of embarkation? Because they profess to give you your cab-in.—*Fun.*

BOXING-DAY.

(Mrs. Bustleton's favourite Cuban has called for his usual Christmas-Box in a state of—never mind.)

Mrs. B. "Oh, Sawyer, I'm surprised—I thought you such a steady man. I'm sorry to see you given to drink!"

Sawyer. "Beg y' par'n, mum, no a'h'ing, mum. (hic.) Drink 'ash g'im t'me, mum, 'ah morn'n, mum."—*Punch.*

FAT GIRLS.

A lady of the teaching sort advertises thus:—"SCHOLASTIC.—Mrs. Pilgrim, Cornwall House, Longslayham, finding her boarders so much increased, will REMOVE at Christmas to Nelson House. Terms, £25; sisters, £45. Diet unlimited."

The unlimited diet has increased the young lady boarders to such an extent that their governess's old house is too small for the pretty giantesses and Miss Daniel Lamberts. Well, but we say, if we had a daughter (we haven't), and wanted to send her to a boarding-school (we shouldn't), we are by no means sure that we should wish Miss Punch to be fed up in this alarming manner. However, we admire the lady's frankness, if not her grammar.—*Punch.*

THE PEACOCKS OF THE CHURCH.

Ladies sometimes are accused of having gone to church to exhibit a new bonnet, or to examine the new bonnets which others there exhibit. But now that certain persons are so splendid in their raiment, we should think that shawls and bonnets must be less attractive than tunics and albs, and whatever other vestments may chance to be displayed. Instead of talking of the sermon, ladies, after church, will criticize the robes worn by the clergymen, and we shall hear such observations as "What a lovely tunic the rector wore this morning!" or "What a sweet thing in dalmatics the vicar had to day!"

Gorgeous vestments clearly are befitting to a church, whose founder specially enjoined us to pay no regard to raiment. Clearly, too, the robes of rainbow colours, the velvet, silks and satins now in fashion with some persons, are precisely the things proper to be worn by the rectors of a church whereof the curates are in some cases dependent upon charity to provide them with clothes.—*Punch.*

A BEAN COLLECTOR.—An eccentric individual has recently died in the Quartier du Val de Grâce, aged seventy-two. He has resided there for more than thirty years, and never received any visitor except his housekeeper, who came every morning. He was known in the neighbourhood as Monsieur le Savante. He was occupied in reading and writing from morning till night. The great fancy of his life was to collect beans. He had beans from all the countries of the world, carefully ticketed and arranged. A few days before his death he paid 100*fr.* apiece for five beans brought from China. His old housekeeper seems of opinion that his death was accelerated from the intense grief he had lately experienced in consequence of having missed from his collection ten peculiar beans brought from Japan. He has left a voluminous manuscript, the title of which is "Natural History of Haricots, and the influence of that valuable vegetable upon humanity." He also wrote some lengthy poems in praise of the haricot.

AN ALARMING ADVENTURE.—When we had paddled into a sequestered bay on this same Gota River a very curious incident occurred. I had debarked upon a rock islet only a few feet long, and the canoe was lying alongside, as usual, while we rearranged the outfit, provisions, sails, and fishing-tackle. A strong current gurgled in deep eddies just outside, and a wave or two sometimes lapped my feet. One or two of these waves having come up higher than usual, I noticed with surprise that the water was evidently rising, and indeed it had nearly covered the little rock, and was floating the canoe. Immediately the thought occurred that this was another event like the "minute tide," near Yenersborg, and we expected to see it soon subside with no worse consequence than wet feet for our crew. But no, the water rose still, and the tide was covered, and—oh, horrible certainty! At last it was plain beyond doubt that the island itself was slowly sinking. The surprise, fear, and strangeness all commingled in this sight it

is quite impossible to describe. That a solid rock should steadily go down and leave me in deep water was a thing unheard of, unthought of, and which no one could be prepared for. The worst was the gradual sinking—had it been immediate of course I should have only had to swim to the canoe; but the mysterious uncertainty made me lose that decision which danger is always met with by a sort of instinct when you are used to it, and if you have previously contemplated it as at all possible. Thus, instead of instant action to get away, I kept dancing and turning on the rock—now well out of sight and below water—until at length, with a strange momentary panic, I stepped on the arched deck of the canoe, and positively managed, by some extraordinary manoeuvre, to walk along this into the boat from her bows—a feat not to be performed in cold blood, even if you started from the solid ground. Thoroughly wet and panting with the intense excitement, and laughing, too, at the extreme oddness of the whole affair, the captain was some time before he could restore order among the ship's company, and things settled down to their regular way. Meanwhile the current had borne us from the place, so it was not properly investigated; but the inquiring canoeist who seeks the spot is directed to the second bay round the east corner, past the fisherman's hut. Probably the explanation of the occurrence is that a huge rock detached from the shore had rolled into deep water, and happened to be poised on its end, until my weight gradually inclined it outwards, when it toppled over slowly into the darker, deeper depths below.—*The Red Key on the Baltic.* By J. Macgregor, M.A.

STATISTICS.

ALTHOUGH the consumption of French wine, which stood in 1860 at about 28,000 hogsheads, has in 1866 increased to nearly 65,000 hogsheads, Spanish wines still show a larger total, being for 1860 about 54,000 hogsheads, and 1866, 108,000. The duty upon French is 1s. per gallon, and upon Spanish 2s. 6d.

MINERAL TRAFFIC ON RAILWAYS.—It appears that in 1865 the Caledonian Railway carried 5,226,275 tons of coal and minerals, as compared with 5,125,757 tons in 1864; the Great Eastern 885,400 tons, against 776,818 tons in 1864; the Great Northern 2,254,218 tons, against 1,934,062 tons in 1864; the Great Western 4,832,415 tons, against 4,574,829 tons in 1864; the Lancashire and Yorkshire 3,888,487 tons, as compared with 3,507,889 tons in 1864; the London and North-Western 9,039,650 tons, as compared with 8,095,164 tons in 1864; the London and South-Western 481,282 tons, as compared with 440,500 tons in 1864; the London, Brighton, and South-Coast 511,194 tons, as compared with 399,840 tons in 1864; the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire 2,146,514 tons, as compared with 1,769,414 tons in 1864; the Midland 5,852,299 tons, as compared with 5,357,004 tons in 1864; the North-Eastern 15,309,991 tons, as compared with 15,398,276 tons in 1864; and the South-Eastern 208,361 tons, as compared with 198,132 tons in 1864. The receipts for last year from coal and mineral traffic on the twelve systems indicated were:—Caledonian, 429,097l.; Great Eastern, 134,878l.; Great Northern, 439,811l.; Great Western, 501,537l.; Lancashire and Yorkshire, 189,186l.; London and North-Western, 891,818l.; London and South-Western, 44,990l.; London, Brighton, and South Coast, 48,584l.; Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire, 164,596l.; Midland, 693,841l.; North-Eastern, 1,300,809l.; and South-Eastern, 51,865l.

RAILWAY COMPENSATION.—The following sums were paid as compensation for personal injuries to passengers by railway companies in 1865:—Caledonian, £12,849; Great Eastern, £21,996; Great Northern, £22,387 (this sum includes also the amount paid for damage and loss of goods); Great Western, £40,061; Lancashire and Yorkshire, £24,708; London and North-Western, £39,728; London and South-Western, £25,000 (this sum includes also the amount paid for damage and loss of goods); London, Brighton, and South Coast, £4,504; Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire, £6,483; Midland, £25,958; North-Eastern, £14,355 (this sum includes also the amount paid for damage and loss of goods); North British, £4,621; and South-Eastern, £70,736.

CONSUMPTION OF MILK IN THE METROPOLIS.—The monthly supply of milk from the country into London is 508,000 gallons. The western counties contribute 140,000 gallons; the eastern counties transmit 125,000 gallons; the northern counties, 95,000; Hants and Berks, 55,000 gallons; and from other districts the daily supply is augmented by 18,500 gallons. Kent and Sussex are the lowest contributing counties; and at the present daily averages, 6,604,900 gallons of milk are annually brought from the country to London, and this is increased by metropolitan dairymen to an extent of another third, and is daily retailed out to about 260,000 customers. The aggregate supply of milk consigned to London is the produce of 20,000 cows in the country. The wholesale prices charged are at an average of 2s. per barn gallon (eight quarts), and the value of milk brought to London for consumption represents a sum of £660,406 per annum.

AN INTERESTING CEREMONY.—In the early part of last century there died a Mr. Raine, a Wapping brewer, who bequeathed a sufficient sum, in real property, for the purpose of qualifying forty well-conducted girls to become candidates for the drawing twice a year of a marriage portion of £100. The drawing of the prize, to be given on the 1st of May next, took place the other day. The fortunate young woman has to name her sweetheart, who must be a young man of the parish of Wapping, and the trustees of the fund, having satisfied themselves of the swain's respectability, the wedding takes place on May-day, when also the dowry is handed over.

FROST WORK.

THEY are the ghosts of flowers,

The blossoms of fairer hours,

I see on the window pane.

They died in woodland and heather,

But, lo! in this wintry weather

Their petals unfold again.

Oh, rare and wonderful flowers

That bloom in these crystal bowers,

How their splendours glance and gleam;

How they glow where the silver sedge

Fringes the rivulet's edge,

And flash in the morning's beam.

Arbutus and eglantine,

The bell of the columbine,

Poised on its stately stem.

Aster and fleur-de-lis,

Wind-kissed anemone,

And the star of Bethlehem.

These and a numberless train

I traced on the frosty pane;

Are they pictures of the brain?

Ah, no! they are exquisite flowers,

The phantoms of sunnier hours,

That blossom in beauty again.

GEMS.

SLANDERS issuing from beautiful lips are like spiders crawling from the blushing heart of a rose.

THE discovery of what is true, and the practice of what is good, are the two most important objects of life.

AFFECTION.—"I speak as I feel," returned Olifford; "were the woman I love suffering through poverty, I would beg with her, if I could not relieve her; through injustice I would defend her; from unkindness I would protect her; and if the world forsook her, I would be to her the world."

LABOUR is the price which has been paid for all things: money is only the representative of labour. It was not by gold or silver, but by labour, that all the wealth, all the refinements, all the means of comfort in the world, were at first purchased.

HUMAN LIFE.—Hope writes the poetry of the boy, but memory that of the man. Man looks forward with smiles, but backward with sighs. Such is the wise providence of heaven. The cup of life is sweeter at the brim, the flavour is impaired as we drink deeper, and the dregs are made bitter that we may not struggle when it is taken from our lips.

STRIKING THE AVERAGE.—A Welsh jury recently had to fix the value of certain lands belonging to Colonel Myddleton Biddulph, and required by the trustees of the Wern Bronygarth Road. They respectively held opinions as to the value, varying from £75 to £450. The foreman induced each jurymen to write the figure at which he fixed the value. These sums he added together and divided by twelve, giving a result of £165, the amount at which the compensation was fixed.

CAUSE OF THE ABANDONMENT OF THE FRENCH EMPRESS'S VISIT TO THE POPE.—The reason why the French Empress has suddenly abandoned the intention of going to Rome is that General de Montebello, who has recently returned to Paris from that city, where he commanded the army of occupation, strongly advised Her Majesty not to go, saying that her presence in Rome might be productive of many grievances and could produce no possible good; also that, if by chance she had conceived that any observations of hers could induce the Pope to modify his line of policy she was

completely in error—the Holy Father being as firm as a rock. "Obstinate as a mule," were, it is said, the precise words used, but firm as a rock is more respectful to the Pontiff. So strong did the General feel on the matter that he brought back his wife with him, though he had orders to leave her at Rome to await the arrival of the Empress.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

CURE FOR A COLD.—To cure a cold put a large tea-cupful of linseed with a quarter of a pound of sun raisins and two ounces of stick liquorice into two quarts of soft water, and let it simmer over a slow fire till reduced to one quart. Add to it a quarter of a pound of pounded sugar-candy, a tablespoonful of old rum and a tablespoonful of the best white vinegar or lemon juice. The rum and vinegar should be added as the decoction is taken. The dose is half a pint, made warm on going to bed; and a little may be taken whenever the cough is troublesome.

FOR BURNS.—"A Regular Practitioner" says that for bad burns and scalds the following remedy is almost magical in its efficacy:—Mix common kitchen whitening with sweet oil, or, if sweet oil is not at hand, with water. Plaster the whole of the burn and some inches beyond it, all around, with the above, after mixing it to the consistency of common paste, and lay it on an eighth, or rather more, of an inch in thickness. It acts like a charm; the most agonizing pain is in a few minutes stilled. Take care to keep the mixture moist by the application, from time to time, of fresh oil or fresh water, and at night wrap the whole part affected in gutta-percha or flannel to keep the moisture from evaporating.

MISCELLANEOUS.

CHRISTMAS DAY was the 800th anniversary of the coronation of William the Conqueror.

THERE are upon an average at least four persons killed in a week upon the railways of the United Kingdom.

THE passenger and goods trains of Great Britain and Ireland during 1865 travelled as far as from the earth to the sun and nearly half the way back again.

At the Oaks colliery, where so many perished the other day, the workings reach to a distance of two miles, and the air-ways are sixty miles in length.

THE directors of the Midland Railway have prohibited the sale of cigars at all the refreshment rooms upon their system.

CHOLERA has broken out in Mountjoy Prison, Dublin. It is stated that four deaths have already occurred.

It is stated that recently one steamer brought from France the enormous number of 26,000 geese for the London market.

In Hungary silver coins bearing the features and title of "Carolus Primus, Rex Hungaricus," are being secretly circulated.

SEVERAL innkeepers in Scotland have been heavily fined for selling drink to children under fourteen years of age.

AN equestrian statue of the Queen is to be erected at Liverpool, the work, costing £5,000, is intrusted to Mr. Thornycroft.

A CHILD a year and three months old has died at the East End of London from being poisoned by mistletoe berries.

THE total amount of stakes won on the English turf during the past season amounted to the sum of £360,250 10s., being exceedingly in excess of that of the preceding year.

THE first instalment of 2,000,000l. paid by the Italian Government on account of the one year's interest on its proportion of the Pontifical debt, which it is to disburse in cash, arrived at Rome a few days ago.

At a wedding at a West End church the other day, there being accidentally no gentleman present to give the lady away, the pew-opener, a woman, thus acted, it being considered legal by the clergyman, on the ground that the Queen had given away Princess Helena at her marriage.

LORD BROUGHAM, writing to Mr. Berryer, alluding to his discussion at the last Manchester Congress, says:—"As it was in my eighty-ninth year it is almost certain that I shall not deliver another. On taking leave of the public I thought it incumbent on me to express my sentiments against wars, and against those great murderers of whom the Emperor Napoleon I. was the most guilty. But I have added that his nephew, Napoleon III., has great merit for his declarations against war."

CONTENTS.

Page	Page
REGINALD'S FORTUNE ... 357	FACE-IT ... 358
PHYSICAL EDUCATION FOR WOMEN ... 340	STATISTICS ... 359
MARION ... 341	AN INTERESTING CERE- ... 359
CAPTAIN WORLEY ... 344	MONEY ... 359
MARGARET'S WEDDING ... 346	FROST WORK ... 359
WOMAN ... 347	GEMS ... 359
"ST. SENORITA, ST." ... 347	HOUSEHOLD TREASURES ... 359
GUY RINGWORTH ... 349	MISCELLANEOUS ... 359
SCHERSC ... 352	
STRANGE FAMILY LAW- ... 352	OLIVER DARVEL, con- ... No.
A LOVER OUTWITTED ... 352	ment in ... 183
ANNA LEIGH ... 353	REGINALD'S FORTUNE, con- ... 184
OLIVER DARVEL ... 355	ment in ... 184
AN ALARMING ADVER- ... 358	"ST. SENORITA, ST." con- ... 184
TURE ... 358	ment in ... 184
	MARION, commences in ... 193

NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

EDWARD SMITH.—See our reply to "Daniel Jones."

LEAH S.—See our reply to "Griasy." (Handwriting very pretty and ladylike.)

R. T. S.—The lines "The Mariner" were declined with thanks some time since.

J. B. Q.—The offspring of an Irishman and a French woman would be Irish of course.

ANGULO.—Zurich is a lake in Switzerland, extending in the form of a crescent chiefly through the canton of Zurich.

ROTHWELL.—Wines were first made in Britain in the year 378.

LEON VALDO.—Clocks were introduced into Constantinople from Venice in the year 872.

JAKE.—The best way to make hominy is to boil Indian corn in milk, and add sugar or salt according to taste.

BILICUA.—*Messiah* is pronounced *mes-si-ah*. It is a Hebrew word, signifying, "the anointed," and applied as expressive of eminence to our Saviour.

J. D. P. D., and M. G. "J. D." nineteen, tall, and fair. "P. D." nineteen, tall, and dark. "M. G." twenty-one, 6 ft 8 in., and suburn complexion.

A SCHREIBER.—To procure a situation in the Civil Service it certainly is not necessary to produce the certificate of your parents' marriage.

ASTORICES S. asks us if a child born in England, the father being a Belgian and the mother English, would the child be English or Belgian?—English.

T. T. R.—Place your case in the hands of a respectable solicitor, when, if your statement be correct, you will speedily recover the money.

POLLY, eighteen, light hair, gray eyes, and a good temper. Respondent must be about twenty-five, rather tall, good looking, and dark.

GRIST.—Good practice under competent tuition. The great Italian singers take stout and oysters, which are supposed to strengthen the voice.

JONES.—There is perhaps no better remedy for the removal of rats and mice than chloride of lime, for these vermin abhor it.

J. T., a bachelor, tall, rather dark, and in a good business. Respondent must be a young lady of good family, tall, fair, very pretty, and accomplished.

EDMUND.—If you wish to make a good dish of "cod richardson" take any that may be left cold, warm it up with mashed potatoes, and serve with oyster sauce poured over.

ELLEN.—To make an eel pudding cut the eel into long pieces, season with salt, pepper, chopped onions, and parsley, and add a gill of water.

ANNETTE.—A pudding cloth, however coarse, ought never to be washed with soap; it should be dried as quickly as possible, and kept free from dust.

LOUISA, nineteen, fair, considered good looking, respectable, and industrious. Respondent must be a mechanic or sailor, about twenty or twenty-three, dark, and tall.

THE WICKED ONE, twenty, tall, considered pretty, fair, ladylike, domesticated, and very respectable, but poor, would like to correspond with a steady, persevering young man a little older than herself.

FALLON.—1. Healthy exercise and temperate living are the only recipe we can give a boy for imparting a bloom to the complexion. 2. If there be such a "saying," it is a very foolish one.

EVILINA, twenty, 4 ft 11 in. in height, fair complexion, blue eyes, light brown hair, good tempered, of a loving disposition, and thoroughly domesticated, but no fortune. Respondent must be steady, amiable, and fond of home.

JESSIE.—To make stock for jellies it should be prepared the day before it is required for use, as the liquor then has time to cool, and the fat can be so much more thoroughly removed when properly set.

A. O. D. asks us how soon a woman can marry a second time legally, providing her husband turns her out of doors?—When she or her husband has obtained a divorce, not before.

BARNLEY.—We know nothing of the celebrated astrologer you mention, nor do we desire to know. How can you believe in such nonsense? Police magistrates have some power over these gentry.

A BARNLEY, seventeen, 5 ft 2 in. in height, light brown hair, black eyes, well educated, and thoroughly domesticated. Respondent must be tall, about eighteen or twenty-one, fond of home, and in a good position; if fair preferred.

A WOULD-BE SOLDIER.—The regulation price of commissions in the British Army are as follows:—Life Guards, Lieutenant-colonelcy, 7,250*l.*; majority, 3,300*l.*; captaincy, 3,500*l.*; lieutenantancy, 1,750*l.*; cornetcy, 1,200*l.* In the Cavalry of the line, 4,500*l.*, 3,200*l.*, 1,800*l.*, 700*l.*, 400*l.* Foot Guards, ensign, 1,200*l.*; lieutenantancy, 2,050*l.*; captaincy, 4,800*l.* The regulation price, however, does not represent the real price; to wit—the command of an ordinary cavalry regiment can

never be obtained under 5,500*l.* and 9,000*l.*, and a captaincy under 5,000*l.* The Earl of Cardigan's various commissions, it is said, cost his lordship 20,000*l.* You cannot purchase beyond the rank of lieutenant-colonel; thus as the Duke of Cambridge entered the army as a lieutenant-colonel he never paid one farthing. An ensign's commission in the line, regulation price, is 450*l.*

REGINALD.—Why complain at your position, with thirty-two shillings per week at twenty-one years of age; you have literally "all the world" before you. Read the lives of the great Franklin, Dr. Johnson, William Cobbett, and even the late Lord Chancellor Campbell.

LILY OF THE VALLEY, nineteen, 5 ft 2 in. in height, dark blue eyes, light brown hair, and very pretty. Respondent must be about twenty-one, tall, dark, and in a good way of business, as "Lily of the Valley" is the daughter of highly respectable parents.

LADY MACBETH and CONSTANCE DE BEVERLEY. "Lady Macbeth," nineteen, tall, blue eyes, and very elegant brown hair. "Constance de Beverley," nineteen, a small brunette, black hair, and violet eyes. Respondents must be tall, fair, and handsome.

LOVELY TOM, twenty-four, 5 ft 10 in. in height, passably good looking, curly hair and whiskers, but no moustache, and in receipt of a good salary in the West End of London. Respondent must be about eighteen, tall, pretty, and above all a good housekeeper.

THE AWFUL COLLIER EXPLOSIONS.

"They and those appertaining to them went down alive into the pit, and they perished from among the congregation."

Sad events from one slight error spring;

We find it so as day by day pass by;

From one small trifle—some negligent thing—

A nation's plunged in woe and misery.

When bright the day with sunny hour,

And danger seems so far from us away,

And pleasure looms with its o'erjoying ray,

Appears to shine upon our passing day;

Then creeping on unseen some cloudy troubles wait

The fitting hour wherein to take their spring

To overthrow and load with saddening weight

Hearts lured away with thoughts that joy's within.

How felt those hearts on that eventful morn

When hurrying forth to 'see their darksome toll?

Obscured beneath whose light doth never dawn,

Nor sunlight smiles to cheer the labouring soul.

Fathers with cares deep wrinkled on their brow,

Sons blooming with the freshness of their year,

Hastening their steps to tasks assigned below

Without a thought or dream of danger near.

Some dwelling 'praps on sights of smiling home,

Which greet them when their gloomy world is o'er;

Some musing o'er the forms they love so dear;

Alas! thought they, these nights would cheer no more.

Some clinging to the thoughts of fleeting year,

The merry scenes that live in winter's gloom,

Framing beneath there in their prisons drear

Joy's alas! from which they're parted soon.

Songs rang, 'praps, through those grim black walls,

Mix'd with the pick's continual clatt'ring din.

When, lo! from one unseen, unthought-of cause

Darkness and death together reign within.

Without one moment sp'rd for needed pray'r,

Down, down below amidst that blacken'd sod

Each soul was summon'd instant to appear

Before its nature, but its maker, God.

Too soon the booming separation blast

Echo'd around its horrid fearful tale:

Mothers frantic as the shock sped past

Lost those so dear were lying cold and pale.

The mourning bell soon struck its stinging dirge,

And sad laments rang thro' the village vale.

Widows, orphans, gather'd round the pit mouth's verge,

Calling in grief to those who heard no wail.

No more to labour in those mines with fear—

No more to answer man with mortal tongue—

Freed from the earth, this wretched vale of tears,

Far brighter scenes let's hope they reign among.

G. C. SWAIN.

CHARLES.—1. It is only by use and practice that you can tell a good cigar from a bad one. 2. In consequence of the vast circulation of THE LONDON READER, it is not possible for us to answer a correspondent in less than three weeks from the time of our receipt of his or her letter.

ELLEN.—To make an arrowroot pudding use two table-spoonfuls of arrowroot, a pint and a half of milk, a little butter, the rind of half a lemon, two table-spoonfuls of moist sugar, and some grated nutmeg; it is equally good baked or boiled, and is reasonable at any time.

MORENO.—To make a Spanish salad use one teaspoonful of water, a very little pepper and salt, two wineglasses of oil, and about a dessert-spoonful of very strong vinegar; but to make it thoroughly good some sweet herbs should be added, chopped very fine.

CURA.—Mulletto, from wale, a mule, is commonly applied to the offspring of parents, one of whom is black, the other white. The mulatto is of a yellowish colour, with frizzled, or woolly, hair, and more resembles the white than the black.

A WOULD-BE ENGINEER.—1. Apply personally to a director, if you are acquainted with one, if not by letter enclosing recommended letters to the board of directors. But without previous training how foolish to expect that you could obtain such an onerous situation. 2. The Scotch lines are least occupied on Sundays.

J. HOBURY says he was born on the 6th of July, 1837, and desires to know what planet was out then, and what influence it has upon the person during life?—If "J. H." like other correspondents, is foolish enough to believe in such nonsense, he had better consult a file of "Old Moore," Zadkiel, or some other such impostor.

TOMLINSON.—You ask "For what do we live?"—To please our Creator ought to be the chief object of us all, in order that we may properly sustain life's relations, and perform its duties. With work surrounding us on all sides, it might be supposed that the selection of our employments was an easy task; yet at this point many err: the man or woman em-

ployed in work for which they are not naturally suited can never attain perfection; sometimes, however, we may be compelled to engage in labour in which we can never attain excellence. In such cases repining is useless, and it displays far more sense, as well as heroism, to submit to our fate than to strive after that which is unobtainable.

F. B. B., nineteen, 5 ft 6 in., black hair, dark eyes, of a very lively temperament, considered good looking, head clerk in a solicitor's office, and will have an income at twenty-one. Respondent must be about the same age, of an amiable disposition, and good looking; one without an income preferred.

ALEXANDER.—Necropolis literally means the city of the dead, and was the name given to a suburb of Alexandria, in Egypt, containing temples, gardens, and mausoleums; hence it has been applied to some of the cemeteries in the vicinity of our large cities, such as the Necropolis of Liverpool, Glasgow, &c.

BRITON.—1. You and your innamorate, having reached the age of twenty-one, can, of course, marry without the consent of your respective friends. 2. Common licences may be obtained at Doctors' Commons, at a cost of 2*l.* 10*s.* You must, however, be married in the church of the parish of which one of you has resided the specified time.

GRANATA.—Nankien is a species of cotton cloth, usually of a yellow colour, imported from China; it takes its name from the City of Nankin, and derives its colour from the peculiar hue of the cotton from which it is made, and not from the use of any dye. A white material of similar texture called *white nankien* is also imported from China.

H. W. R.—We will not for your sake undertake to recommend the bank you mention. We should "fight shy" of any society that offered such high interest. The high interest offered by so many of the companies (limited), now come to grief, has proved the bait to lure thousands to their ruin. (Handwriting is not good; it requires more care, and much practice.)

ORNEST.—According to all accounts, the Nestorians were the first Protestant Christians, and derived their origin from Nestorius, the Patriarch of Constantinople, under Heraclius, A.D. 431; but of course they do not resemble in everything the Protestants of the Church of England. A remnant of these people, numbering from 20,000 to 30,000, leading a pastoral life, inhabit the plains and mountains of Oroomiah, in the north of Persia. They were frequently appointed by the caliphs to the government of cities, towns, and provinces.

POOR TOM.—Take heart. You know that "the course" of true love never did run smooth. "Time softens all things." Thus, if you are deserving and patient, it is probable that a few years, perhaps months, may mollify the stony hearts of the mistress and aunt of your innamorate, who never will permit you either to see or to write to her; at all events, although you feel now that it is impossible to live without seeing or hearing from her till her time is up to leave her situation, think well before, following the custom of the ancient Romans, you throw yourself upon your sword.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:—ROBIN HOOD is responded to by—"Annie H." twenty-three, medium height, dark brown hair, fond of home, and domesticated—"Rachel," who feels sure she would make him a good wife, twenty-one, tall, fair, very industrious, quiet, and fond of home—"Emily," who is his own age, and thinks he would suit her very well, is very kind and loving, thoroughly domesticated, and of a very cheerful disposition—"Mary Green," twenty-seven, 5 ft 2 in. in height, quiet, very domesticated, fond of home, of a loving disposition, and respectfully connected—"A. S. R.," nearly thirty, 5 ft 5 in., very affectionate, thoroughly domesticated, and a good housekeeper—"Ann," who wants a quiet home of her own, and not without a little sum in the Post-Office Savings' Bank; and—"Lilian," thirty, middle height, dark, particularly retired, and domesticated.

GEORGE by—"Florence," sixteen, 5 ft, light blue eyes, fair hair, and in a good business, should like to exchange cards—"Ada," seventeen, medium height, fair, pretty, and of a loving disposition; and—"Daisy," nineteen, medium height, fair, light hair, blue eyes, some say pretty, thoroughly domesticated, and will make a loving wife.

H. R. L. by—"Clara," who thinks she is just the sort of a young man that would suit her. She is not pretty, but a kind, loving, thoroughly domesticated, and would make a very good wife—"Tottie Sharp," eighteen, dark, pretty, and thoroughly domesticated; and—"Emma," sixteen, brown hair and eyes, and respectfully connected.

A. B. T. by—"Mary Jane Forster," twenty-two, a petite figure, dark hair and eyes, considered good looking, very domesticated, and of a highly respectable family.

ALFRA by—"Fanny," twenty-three, 5 ft 4 in. in height, with a profusion of black curly hair, dark blue eyes, good teeth, genteel figure, domesticated, and of a confiding and loving disposition.

H. C. M. by—"Frederick Durrant," who thinks he would most her views, 5 ft 7 in. in height, chestnut hair, hazel eyes, very good looking, a steady young man, a total abstainer, with a little money, and does not care about her being unaccomplished.

LIZZIE by—"J. F. R." twenty-two, a foreman cooper, 2*l.* a week, yet very bashful.

M. J. B. and AMELIA by—"Edmund E. P."

MARY, a GERMAN, by—"Frank," thirty-seven, 5 ft 10 in. in height, light complexion, good teeth, healthy, sober habits, cheerful, and a respectable tradesman.

PART XLV., FOR FEBRUARY, IS NOW READY. PRICE 6*d.*

* * * Now Ready, VOL. VII. OF THE LONDON READER. PRICE 6*d.*

Also, the TITLE and INDEX to VOL. VII. PRICE ONE PENNY.

N.B.—CORRESPONDENTS MUST ADDRESS THEIR LETTERS TO THE EDITOR OF "THE LONDON READER," 354, Strand, W.C.

* * * We cannot undertake to return Rejected Manuscripts. As they are sent to us voluntarily, authors should retain copies.

London: Printed and Published for the Proprietor, at 354, Strand, by J. WATSON.